

BEING A GOOD TEACHER

HENRY C. KREBS



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BEING A GOOD TEACHER

BY

HENRY C. KREBS

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS, SOMERSET COUNTY

NEW JERSEY

AUTHOR OF "REACHING THE CHILDREN"



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FOREWORD

The purpose of this book is implied in its title—the teacher's own development and advancement. Toward this object it discusses, besides certain elements which enter into good teaching, some of the characteristics of the good teacher; special emphasis being laid upon the solution of many of the difficulties and the mastery of many of the situations which confront every teacher day by day. The author will feel repaid if he succeeds in helping his readers along the sometimes difficult road toward the desired goal.

H. C. K.

March, 1918.

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CHAPTER 1

THE IDEAL AND THE PRACTICAL

Miss Agnes Repplier, our brilliant American essayist, in discussing present political conditions in this country, closed an article in a recent number of the *Atlantic Monthly* with this significant sentence:

Carthage had commerce: Rome had ideals.

We have all read of the activity and enterprise of the Carthaginians in the way of trade. Their ships dotted the Mediterranean from the remotest east to the pillars of Hercules and beyond. They established trading posts wherever there were products to be conveyed. They founded cities and subdued peoples. But, when the inevitable conflict with Rome came on, the Carthaginian empire was found to be built upon the sand. Her commerce was business for the mere sake of business. It was activity without great national ideals. In rivalry with the high-minded, incorruptible, stout-hearted Romans whose every act was based on established principles, there could be but one result in the end. The genius of

Hannibal could not counterbalance his country's national insufficiency.

Passing from nations to individuals, the contrast between the ideal and the practical is illustrated in Mary and Martha of the Scriptures. It is also shown in a general way by the young man who leaves the public schools to earn money, contrasted with his classmate who keeps on through college; or by the road commissioner who year after year shovels gravel onto the road which the rain regularly washes out, compared with those who recognize that road-building is a science, and employ a competent contractor to lay down a permanent structure.

The "Carthaginian" teachers are those who have no use for books or for discussions that do not deal with practical devices. They are interested in such topics as "The best method of teaching spelling," "How to keep order," etc. Such subjects as "The teacher's ideals," "Progressive education," "The principles of teaching," do not attract them, because these do not deal with the minutiae of schoolroom routine.

Of course there is no best method of teaching spelling, nor of keeping order. If there were, the task of teaching would be greatly lightened. In such matters the teacher's own personality must be her guide. She will not do her best work so

long as she remains content to lean on the personality of another. To become strong as a teacher one must evolve one's own "best methods"—whether of teaching or of discipline. However, an intelligent discussion of "best methods" may be of the highest value, but only on condition that no cut-and-dried "method" is to be slavishly followed.

No one will deny that commerce is important to any nation, or that the work of the Marthas is essential to the very maintenance of life. The study of methods in business and of domestic science is becoming increasingly valuable in modern life. The study of the very commonplace affairs of school routine, such as janitor's work, the daily program and the teaching of spelling, is of much importance. But, unless this work is undertaken in the light of principles and ideals, it is inevitably ineffective.

England was ever sedulous in developing commerce with the whole world, and at one time believed that her prosperity depended especially on the amount of trade she could develop between the home country and her own colonial possessions. Laws were enacted with the intention of developing colonial commerce, but permitting it with the mother country alone. The underlying principle of her commercial activities was self-

aggrandizement. Under this system she lost her richest American colonies and risked the loyalty of her other possessions. Wise statesmen presently realized the error and reversed the principle. Instead of making the motherland the sole beneficiary of their efforts they joined hands with the colonies for mutual development and prosperity. The result has been the establishment of the finest colonial system in all history. Not only has the commercial advancement of the colonies been amazing, but that of the mother country has been still more so; and besides, she has drawn to her bosom with bonds unbreakable the colonies whose destinies are at one with her own.

In the old school the primary purpose of discipline was to keep the pupils quiet. This was to be accomplished through the use of the rod. It was the easiest way, and it achieved immediate results. It fulfilled its aim. The school was quiet. Was this the "best method" of keeping order? It has now fallen into disuse. It is still desirable to have the pupils quiet; but the method of securing quiet by tactful management—getting the pupils interested in their desk work, and keeping them interested—has proved far more successful, and in many ways, than the old method of control through fear.

The most practical thing in the world is a cor-

rect ideal. It is "the real as it should be." The more we study life as it should be, the better we shall live. The more we study children as they should be, the more capable shall we be to lead them toward the highest standards. The more we study ideal school conditions the more capable shall we be to better the existing situations. Without ideals there are no standards of measurement or of comparison. There may be activity, but it will be horizontal, so to speak, not vertical. Such activity leads nowhere. Its products are not permanent. No one who lacks the upward reach can accomplish great things which shall be both great and enduring.

But we are told that idealists are unpractical. Ridicule is heaped upon "mere theorists." While they are wandering blissfully through the realms of imagination others must provide their bread and butter. However, if that be a fault it should not be laid to their idealism. The trouble may be that they lack the other qualities necessary to an efficient life. General Grant had little appreciation of art in any form; however, that was not because he had practical military ability, but in spite of it. Yet General Grant was a man of high ideals in his special sphere.

The Scripture is forever true that if we seek first the kingdom of God and its righteousness

all other things will be added unto us. By devoting ourselves solely to seeking food and raiment we run the risk not only of missing the kingdom of God but also of failing to gain that which we are seeking. So the teacher who fails to heed the higher things of education, confining her activities to the mere drudgery of daily routine is in danger of failing not only in the higher development of her pupils but also in putting them through their ordinary tasks successfully.

Instinctively we tire of activities that lead nowhere. The story is told of an experiment made on a poor man who had been out of work. He was promised good wages, and under good working conditions was set to work to move a heap of stones from one part of a field to another. He entered with enthusiasm upon the task. When it had been accomplished, he was ordered to move the stones all back to the original place. This done, he was told to move them again as in the first instance; and then back again, as before. Ere long this fruitless work became unendurable, and he gave up the job, saying he would rather starve.

What we need in our schools is enthusiasm, with ambition—worthy motives, lofty aims, high endeavors. With these, or even some of these, will not good work be inevitable? Likewise a good

school? The methods good. The pupils attentive. The progress sure and great. Such, then, should be the main objects of our study and striving. Rome had her ideals; commerce followed. Carthage had commerce; but lacking ideals, she fell.

The late James J. Hill, president of the Northern Pacific Railroad, once stopped at a small station on the line and inquired for the agent. He found the latter so engaged in looking after small matters that he had no time to talk, even to the president of the railroad. Mr. Hill, however, found opportunity to give the agent this valuable advice: "Young man, I had rather find you in your office with your feet on your desk, planning how to advance the interests of this company than see you running about the platform attending to details that belong to subordinates."

It has been well said that "a sure sign that one is an idle man is to complain of being busy." The man with nose continually on the grindstone would certainly be busy, but could not see much when in that position. If one man spends ten hours on a task that another does in five, the chances are that the latter's product is of a better quality than the former's. The teacher who is so "busy" that she has not time for teachers' meetings or summer schools, nor for recreation and social life, is sapping her own life, besides inviting

professional failure. For the sake of present smaller results she invests, as it were, the very capital which, properly employed, would later earn also health, friendships, and professional advancement.

A teacher of a certain one-room school lived with her parents near the school. Not having to pay board, she laid aside from year to year nearly the whole of her salary. She did not dress well, she spent no money for professional improvement. She was bent on laying up money in the savings bank. Naturally, she never advanced beyond that little school. Being so isolated she developed personal peculiarities which alone would have debarred her from a higher position. Moreover, the quality of her work so deteriorated that she was merely tolerated by the school board—because they disliked to remove one who had taught so long in the district. She saved her money, but at what a forfeit! And what an offense against the children who during all the years of her incumbency her mediocrity held back.

Another girl began teaching at the age of sixteen without even a high school education. She was ambitious and did much private study; but because of home conditions it was not till after sixteen years that she was free to go to the normal school from which she graduated in due course.

She specialized in the education of defectives, became an authority in her field, and commanded a liberal salary. These two instances from real life show how the wise investment of money in pursuit of higher things is at once the better financial policy, while also the better policy in terms of usefulness and advancement.

The teacher without ideals seldom gets joy out of her work. To her it is a mere shift, a temporary livelihood; its activities a hardship, its duties disagreeable tasks done under compulsion. By and by her temper asserts itself. She becomes hard and bitter. She cannot conceal the lines in her face. She cares less and less for the esthetic side of life; and becomes dissatisfied, discouraged, and in all respects unhappy.

Contrast with this the alert, inspiring teacher, constantly trying new plans, learning new characteristics of her pupils, watching their growth and ministering to it; taking courses of study, cultivating the arts, making herself socially efficient by dressing well, frequenting good society, and enjoying life. Who would not spend one's days in this happy way rather than in the monotonous, driven, existence of the teacher whose sole desire is to be "practical"? To *be* something, to *stand* for something, one must have the stimulus and the sustaining power of great ideals.

CHAPTER 2

GETTING PUPILS TO STUDY

One test of a teacher is her ability to get pupils to study through proper motives. A teacher who fails in this test will have difficulty hard to surmount. Hence the fundamental importance of the subject of this chapter.

In the old time school the fear of the rod was the accepted incentive to study. In most schools of to-day recourse is had to other means. Books on school management contain long lists of natural and artificial incentives, some proper, others improper. In many primary classrooms may be seen gift stars, for example, awarded for excellencies such as attendance, punctuality, neatness, skill in spelling, etc. It seems hardly necessary to go into a discussion of these devices. The books give the arguments for and against, mostly against. Suffice it to say a good teacher has at command so many unquestioned and unquestionable natural methods for interesting the pupils in their studies and keeping them busy, that artificial devices are needless. It is the universal experience that the teacher at school or the professor at college who is full of enthusiasm inspires

the students, and enlists their interest, so that they study for sheer love of study. The teacher or professor who lapses into lifelessness may be sure that he will gain neither the attention nor interest of the class. The teacher in love with her subject will present it attractively, thus solving the whole problem.

There are, however, in every school certain pupils who are exceptions to the rule. They may have so little taste for certain subjects that their interest may not be aroused by ordinary means. Such pupils must be made a special study. It is an advantage to get these pupils into a favorable, and even sanguine, attitude toward such subjects, by helping them to do well in their recitations. To every boy and girl there is something exhilarating about facing a class and reciting so well as to gain the commendation of the teacher.

Let us suppose a boy is listless over the history. Let the teacher tell him privately that she will call on him the next day for a topic not found in the lesson, but one which he by timely preparation may recite creditably. When she calls on him, the next day, he will probably be able to relate some facts that will interest the rest of the class because new to them. His own interest will be enhanced, his confidence in himself increased, and his whole attitude changed. The one topic well

learned will be the basis for further progress, and the one success the augury of others. If a girl is discouraged in arithmetic, let the teacher give her the chance to recite upon problems she has successfully solved, not call upon her for those she cannot explain. Instead of mortification and discouragement, she will presently experience a new feeling—of confidence, and courage, and hope, and proper pride; and she, like many another girl similarly led, may become almost a “shark” at mathematics! If pupils who dislike a subject are never given an opportunity to recite creditably, their interest in it is not likely to be aroused.

Perhaps one of the star pupils in drawing has no liking for history or geography. In that case the obvious method of approach is through his aptitude in drawing. In both the subjects the blackboard should be in constant use for illustrating the topics discussed; and the pupil who can draw well may do most of the work on the board. Should he be called upon, for example, to prepare to draw at the board for the class the pictures of colonial furniture, or of agricultural implements, or of forts and weapons of war, or what not, he must necessarily familiarize himself with them; and the discussions by the class that naturally grow out of the pictured objects will almost surely stir within him an interest in history. Besides,

his drawings will add greatly to the value of the recitation to the whole class.

If one of the pupils delights in declamation, the teacher may interest him in history by assigning patriotic selections to be recited. Historical novels and geographical readers also form a good starting point for pupils slow in these subjects.

The foregoing illustrate some of the special methods of approach through which the interest of a pupil in one subject may be connected with some other subject to which he has been indifferent. It remains to be said that the teacher must take more pains to explain such subjects than those subjects require which the pupils like. She must make things clear. Her constant practice must be to bring to class interesting illustrative material, and to connect it with the subject on the one hand and with the pupils' tastes on the other.

Another way to get pupils to study is by arousing their ambition. It is a well-known fact that boys and girls will go to any amount of trouble to secure a coveted object. There was once a farmer's boy ten years old who was exceedingly fond of Fourth-of-July firecrackers. To this boy a pack of firecrackers had been a rarity. The day before the Fourth one of the field hands told the boy that if he would bring fresh drinking

water for himself and the other hands during the afternoon in the fields, a pack of firecrackers would be his reward on the following day. The boy was bound to win that prize. The distance from the house to the fields was about a half-mile. The boy filled his gallon carrier with water and hastened with it to the fields, arriving there some fifteen minutes after the men had begun to work. They praised his diligence, and he ran home again, to re-fill the carrier and make a second rapid trip. Back and forth he hurried that entire hot afternoon, seldom resting between times more than five minutes. He did not know that the farm hands were having a joke at his expense. Early the next day one of them went to town, and on returning was met by the eager boy who asked for his firecrackers. "They didn't have any more," was the unfeeling reply, and the boy suffered a cruel disappointment. Of course that was the joke. But presently the man, who really was a kind-hearted person, found in his pockets two packs of the coveted firecrackers, and the boy's delight may be imagined.

There is, perhaps, no better way of arousing the pupils' interest in study than by lessons in biography that show the results springing from application to books. The story of young Lincoln, trite to us, is ever fresh to the youthful mind.

The example of Daniel Webster is much to the point. The early achievements of Alexander Hamilton, the application to study of Jefferson, Madison, John Quincy Adams, Longfellow, Lowell, Emerson, Phillips Brooks, and many other Americans will stimulate the boys. The story of Mary Lyon, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Frances E. Willard and Alice Freeman Palmer will appeal to the girls. When once a pupil has formed the purpose to emulate these noble characters, there will be no need for further urging.

Thus far our attention has been directed toward stimulating study in books. There are studies, of course, not wholly confined to books. Industrial work and manual training are of great value, requiring close application, and appealing to some pupils for whom books make slight appeal. Those who have a natural bent for craft work need no special incentive. In other cases the teacher may point out the remarkable products of intensive farming. Those who do not care for farming may perhaps take kindly to landscape gardening, or to floriculture. Illustrated magazines will stimulate discussion, and are replete with suggestions for practical work.

In general, the most potent force that influences pupils to study is the spirit and the example of the teacher. If she be well read in books, and

well versed in manual work; if she be a keen observer of nature and of human nature, and of a cheerful and helpful temper, her pupils will catch the spirit from her.

A teacher of plane geometry in a certain high school captured the eager interest of his class by departing from the old, stereotyped method of demonstration. He devised practical applications of the theorems. Many of the recitations were conducted on the playgrounds and in the neighborhood, with actual measurements. The principles of geometry were also applied to certain problems of physics and of astronomy. The pupils discerned the relation between geometry and some of the affairs of life. The study was not merely theoretical, but practical. That the lively interest of his pupils marked the work and the recitations of this teacher's classes was but a matter of course.

We are here forced to admit that teaching of this type requires a preparation that not all teachers can command. The geometry teacher just referred to was a normal school graduate, a college graduate, and an indefatigable summer school student. His scholarship was unusual. No mere tyro is capable of treating geometry on broad lines. But it should be taught on broad lines; and those who do not have the equipment

to use such methods should spare no effort to get it. If teaching is as serious a business as, say, the practice of medicine, the teacher needs as thorough preparation for her work as does the physician for his. If many lives have been lost because physicians had not learned how properly to diagnose and treat certain diseases, equally true is it that many children have grown up in ignorance because we teachers have not known how to guide them. If our schools have lacked animation, it was because our own spirit has lacked "pep." One cannot impart the vital spark in whose own soul there is no fire. To which the would-be successful teacher must add knowledge broad and deep, along with the fruits of experience—fruits harvested by others for his benefit, as well as those garnered by his own toil.

CHAPTER 3

THE HEALTH OF THE CHILDREN

One of the characteristics of good teaching as opposed to poor teaching is its breadth—its scope. The good teacher has a wide vision. To paraphrase the old Latin dictum, everything relating to children is of interest to her. She teaches pupils, not lessons. The latter are the media, the instruments of her influence, but they are not the end. There are some things of importance besides the attainment of hundred per cent class records.

In view of the great emphasis placed in recent years on the physical basis of life there is no excuse for anyone who considers herself competent to undertake the responsibility of teaching to be ignorant of the importance of physical training and of correct methods of improving the bodies of the children. That teacher belongs to the past who considers the merely mental as her entire sphere of endeavor. All right-thinking parents would prefer to have one hour per day less of study for their children if necessary to gain even fifteen minutes of physical exercises rather than that the daily program should ignore

this fundamental requirement for an efficient life.

If our schools were wisely conducted, each year would show not only proper intellectual progress but also marked physical development. It is, on the contrary, a matter of common observation that in some schools, especially those above the grammar grades, each year discloses a decrease in the students' vitality; and when the high school pupil, particularly the high school girl, steps forward to receive her graduation diploma, we see an emaciated, anemic form where we should see buoyancy, vigor, health. The girl who graduated at the head of her class, so overworked that she was unable to read her commencement essay, had achieved a dubious success. Unless the teacher, at the end of the school year, shall have kept her pupils up to the right level of health her laurels will have been dimmed accordingly even though the pupils seem perfect in their studies.

What increases the teacher's responsibility is the fact that while the body is growing, certain defects can be corrected which later are irremediable. Nobody ever became a great musical performer who did not begin work on an instrument early in life. The would-be violinist or pianist who first begins practice at the age of twenty-one can never attain the suppleness of

touch that early training would have made possible. If the teacher fails to attend to certain of the defects in the children's bodies, they are likely to persist through life, or at least to yield only to prolonged treatment, and in any event retard their mental and spiritual growth.

Teachers who are alive to the importance of physical training should realize that both intelligence and knowledge are necessary for directing this work. Routine calisthenic exercises are not a panacæa for bodily defects. Indeed, they are worth very little except to stimulate the circulation and furnish a diversion from study. It is just as impossible for the teacher to develop the body without knowing how as it is to teach reading without knowing how. Practically all our normal and other training schools require at least one year's study of psychology for prospective teachers; but very few require an equal amount of work in physical training. Yet as between the two the chances are that a course in physical training for teachers would be of more value to the children than a course in psychology.

A teacher versed in physical training will have acquired a large part of schoolroom psychology. She will not tolerate impure air in the schoolroom, and this will go far to solve the psychological problems of stupidity, listlessness and disorder.

She will teach the pupils to sit properly and to breathe properly—two other factors on the road to manliness and womanliness. We say of a young man who is over-confident that he is “chesty.” Give “chest” to one who is under-confident and that moral defect will disappear.

There is a difference between physical instruction and physical training. The latter implies drill—habit-formation. Instruction without such drill is of slight avail. So little of our talking carries over into life that much talk is much waste of time. Children may be able to explain clearly the necessity for bathing—how the pores must be kept open for the elimination of bodily waste, how impurities spread disease, etc.; but how much better off are the children for this knowledge if they do not bathe regularly and frequently? Unfortunately our school buildings are not equipped as yet with baths. But with such equipment as every school may furnish there are many drills which provide ample habit-forming physical training.

Proper breathing is one of the fundamentals of bodily development and good health. The lungs inhale oxygen and exhale waste matter. Moreover, with the oxygen nitrogen is inhaled. This latter element is too often under-valued. At one time it was considered merely a harmless gas

serving to dilute the oxygen. But when we consider that compounds of nitrogen enter into the most powerful explosives we may well believe that the nitrogen we inhale at every breath performs more than a merely negative part.

Very few people breathe so as to utilize the full lung capacity. In many persons one-half the lung cells are never active. This invites a condition favorable to tuberculosis. By breathing lazily, so to speak, one sacrifices many of the benefits that spring from complete lung action. If the lung capacity is developed, there will be a corresponding increase in chest expansion. This is the point of approach in inducing pupils to practice the necessary exercises. The teacher with tape line should take chest measurements of each pupil—one with passive chest, one with inflated chest. These measurements should be taken in two ways—under the arms, and over the arms as they hang at the sides. Thus there will be four measurements for each child. These should be recorded on paper. Every two weeks thereafter similar measurements should be taken, and the figures recorded. In this way the progress, if any, may be noted. It is probable that all pupils will take an interest in chest development, and will be eager to watch their improvement from time to time. They will vie with each other as

in a game, seeing who can make the greatest gain in a given time. It is not improbable that a gain of two inches can be made the first month, and two inches more by the end of the year. This would be a great asset in the future health of any youth.

For this exercise have the pupils stand with arms at sides, feet together; inhale by means of short breaths until the lungs are full. Exhale. Repeat five times. At first five or six breaths will seem to fill the lungs; but in time ten, fifteen, or even twenty short breaths can be taken before the lungs are full. At first there should be no straining; but after a month an extra breath may without harm be attempted after the lung expansion seems to have reached the maximum. Of course the windows should be open during the exercise; and pupils should be encouraged to practice it outdoors also. In due time every air cell in the lungs will be brought into action. The greatest possible quantity of oxygen and nitrogen will reach the very places where their functions are performed. The entire system will be exhilarated because of the improved circulation and purification of the blood, and these exercises will prove to have been of paramount value in the development of health and strength. For further details the teacher is referred to the books of

recognized authorities on physical training. The methods of presenting this matter must be such as to awaken interest and encourage emulation. The fun element should be present. Some of these exercises may be exhibited at the school entertainments. The resourceful teacher will have little trouble in conducting the work so as to render it a perennial pleasure both to herself and to her pupils. The returns from her efforts will be manifold.

The wise teacher will give proper attention to the care of the children's eyes. On dark days the window shades should all be raised to the top. On other days all the shades to the left of the pupils should always be raised to the top unless the direct rays of the sun forbid. Old buildings often do not have sufficient window space, which should be equal to one-fifth of the floor space. New buildings generally have the proper proportion; and yet in many schools the teachers every day shut out one-half the light by lowering the shades to the middle of the windows. If the children have just half as much light as they should have, not only will their eyesight be endangered, and possibly their health, but the quality and quantity of their work will be diminished.

Attention should be given to the care of the teeth. If physiology is not a prescribed part of

the course of study, the teacher should at least teach the value of mastication, which requires good teeth. Then show how particles of food lodge between the teeth for hours or even days unless removed by a tooth brush. These particles may decay and develop poisons which by and by injure the teeth, and even find their way into the body and become a prime cause of disease. It is now believed by physicians that many of the diseases of the stomach are occasioned by poor teeth. The tooth-brush habit should be established, encouraged by exercises in the correct way of brushing the teeth. Already some school clubs exist, one rule of which is that every member shall use the tooth brush twice a day at the least.

One of the habits difficult to establish in children, especially in rural districts, is that of daily bathing. In many rural homes bathing is regarded as a fad, and as such is derided. In many of the older houses there are no bathroom facilities and no warm dressing rooms, the lack of which makes bathing troublesome. Here again physiology must be enlisted to the extent at least of explaining the importance of open pores. The next step is to induce some kind of bathing, even if only a "sponge" of the whole body before going to bed—in itself a step forward in cleanliness. By and by a cold scrub in the morning may be

secured. A pitcher of water, a basin, and a rough towel are the requirements—and five minutes of time. Naturally this program should begin in warm weather. Pupils who bathe daily may be given advanced standing in the health club.

Much has been said in criticism of improper posture among pupils in school. Its harmfulness in causing round shoulders and spinal curvature is unquestioned. But too often the pupil is blamed for incorrect position when the fault is with the relative position of the seat and desk. In the majority of schools the seats are too far away from the desks, compelling the pupil to sit on the front edge of the seat when writing, and to bend over at the same time. He is most uncomfortable at all times, and falls into awkward positions to rest his tired muscles.

The desk should be so close to the pupil's body that when he sits erect, with his shoulders against the back of the seat, he will be in proper writing position. The distance between the back of the seat and the front of the desk should be nine inches for average primary pupils and thirteen for average high school pupils. Of course the proper distance must be adjusted for each child according to his physique, and not according to grade or age.

How often, too, in a room that has single ad-

justable seats and desks are they all too low! For instance, in one room containing more than forty seats, all were uniformly eight inches from the floor, though some of the pupils were fourteen years old! They curled themselves up as best they could; but so indifferent were those in authority that for a whole year no change was made in the adjustment of this furniture—a dereliction that seems incredible in a modern community; yet this was an actual case in a town school with a good reputation.

In a rural school the teacher can remedy improper seating through the services of her older boys. A screw driver and a gimlet can readily be borrowed, and the boys will be glad to do the work. To bemoan the unhygienic condition of the seating and to do nothing to correct it argues a helplessness that does not bespeak a resourceful teacher. The capable teacher is emphatically one who translates wish into action, who brings things to pass, who gets things done.

Other hygienic matters should be approached as before suggested. Good air in the schoolroom, open windows in the home day and night, outdoor and indoor play and games, proper sleep and rest, all need the teacher's attention. Of course in all these matters the teacher must be the exemplar. It were poor policy to ask the pupils to take a cold

morning scrub but not do likewise one's self. It has been said that the best way to teach upright carriage is by example—walk erectly. The same is true of other fields of physical development. The teacher should not merely point the way, but should lead the way. By no other course will she attain practical results in the health of the children.

CHAPTER 4

THE TEN TALENT PUPIL

In nearly all schoolrooms some pupils are exceptionally dull, and others exceptionally bright. More attention is now given to former than in the old days. Special classes for subnormal pupils are compulsory in some states. In no state is legal provision made for the supernormal. And yet, who will render the greater service to the state and to the country, the subnormal or the supernormal?

To which group of pupils does the average teacher give most time and strength, the bright or the dull? Some teachers say, "Never mind the bright pupils, they will take care of themselves. It is the slow pupils who need the most help." The most help—to what end? To attain an artificial passing standard, which, if of any value at all, is designed for the pupils of normal capacities, not those who are above or below the normal. In other words, by this plan we neglect the pupils who are the most promising, and favor those who are the least promising. The farmer who would let his good fields lie neglected but would work industriously the unproductive soil

would himself be classified as subnormal. The mining company that would let its rich mines lie idle but work the barren ones would quickly go into bankruptcy. The fisherman who would whip the troutless streams and avoid the promising pools would carry home an empty basket. The lover of horses who would let his thoroughbreds disport themselves at will but would train his hacks would never win a speed record. In these and practically all other lines of activity the practice is to develop that which has the most promise, the material that has the best quality, the stock with the finest strain.

It is admitted at once that all children are human beings, not to be treated as mines, or fields, or horses. Nature's method of the survival of the fittest is superseded in human life by the purpose of fitting as many as possible to survive. Nevertheless, the loss to the state through the neglect of bright children is much greater than the saving through the care of the dull children. It is the bright children who grow up to be leaders, persons whose influence shapes the course of events, while the subnormal are at best merely followers. It would seem a proper contention that every child in a room has a right to an equal portion of the teacher's time and effort. No parent has a right to ask for more; but he has the

right to demand that his child shall not be neglected because he is bright.

In the nature of the case, the ten talent pupil needs treatment different from that accorded to the one talent pupil. They are opposites in every respect. What is proper for one is usually improper for the other. The dull pupil must have problems explained to him many times, and in most elementary form. This process is not only unnecessary in the case of the bright pupil, but is harmful, because it tends to retard his mental quickness. The dull pupil can work few problems while the bright pupil works many. The one can get but a few ideas in history while the other gets many. In brief, it is evident that uniform treatment for both classes of pupils is sure to be wrong for the one, and it may be for both.

The bright pupil is apt to show a predominance of the mental over the physical. Hence particular care must be taken that he does not overwork, and that he takes sufficient outdoor exercise. Every effort should be made to interest him in sports, not only for the sake of the intellectual diversion but for the purpose of building up a physique to match his mind.

The bright pupil deserves unusual privileges in promotion. He can do the work of eight grades in seven, six, or even five years, if given suitable

opportunities. As long as he does not overwork, he can skip grades every second or third year. "But," you say, "How can he go from the fifth grade to the seventh without having had any of the work of the sixth?" Well, he can. Give him the chance and he will prove it. Seventh grade work properly done implies a constant review of sixth grade, and in this review he will get all he needs for the seventh grade. We are not dealing with an average pupil, but with an exceptional pupil. He is not amenable to ordinary rules. He is able to do what others cannot do. * A good plan for the rest of the class is not a good one for him. Hence the usual reasoning does not hold in his case.

Care must be taken that this pupil does not receive excessive praise. Why is he bright? Is it because of any merit or achievement of his own? Surely not. It is because he has been richly endowed. He has received native gifts from his ancestors. Probably he does not study more than others in the class whose work is poor; but with his natural quickness of perception and of thought he is able to produce unusual results. To praise and pet this boy for his achievements is often to spoil him, make him vain, cause him to cherish undue self-appreciation. Of course teacher and pupils will recognize his superior ability; but they will be careful not to express any rapture

on the subject if his best welfare is to be served. Let the encouragement be given to the pupils most in need of it.

The ten talent pupil should study his subjects more broadly than his classmates. The small amount of information contained in any textbook is not proportionate to his ability. He should be given supplementary books to read, references to look up, additional investigations to make. This will help him and the class. It is very important that this pupil gain an advanced education. If his people are poor, the teacher should advise with them as to ways and means to make high school and college possible. Sometimes older brothers or sisters can help, as in the case of Daniel Webster. The boy can have recourse to self-help, as many are doing who are working their way through college. Some men of means are willing to lend money to deserving students. Some institutions have funds for the help of students. In practically every case a way may be found. The teacher can do no better service than to secure the higher education of her talented pupils.

Suppose the ten talent pupil, instead of being a boy, is a girl. This is as likely as not to be the case. Is there any difference to be shown? Only this, that the girl probably needs more informa-

tion on higher education than does the boy. He has the well-beaten paths of law, medicine, theology, and engineering before him. The girl is likely to know of no vocation other than teaching. Catalogues containing particulars as to nursing, secretarial and library work, social service, domestic science, and other branches open to women should also be explained to her. The sooner she can decide on the line of work she wishes to pursue, the easier it will be to provide for the necessary preparation.

The other day a young man said, "I was bound out to a farmer until eighteen years old. My attendance at school averaged only one-third of the year because the farmer was not well and I had to stay out of school to work. I was in the eighth grade three years and would not have tried to graduate from it if my teacher had not encouraged me to attempt the examinations. I passed. Then I worked my way through high school. Next I gained a college scholarship by competitive examination. I am now a junior at college. I work all summer to earn money, and at the college during the term. In this way I am going through. I love chemistry, am specializing in it, and expect to take it up for my life work." The teacher of this little rural school did a service to the world in encouraging this boy.

It is usually true that bright pupils are ambitious. They feel within themselves a certain power which arouses aspirations and a desire for intellectual advancement. But occasionally one finds a ten talent pupil who is disposed to bury his fortune as did the one talent man of the parable. He is indolent, careless, and averse to effort. The work of the teacher in such cases is to wake him out of his lethargy. To do this she must acquaint herself with his tastes and desires. If he is interested in history, biography, or stories, the teacher must see that he has books on the subject of his choice.

For instance, there are very few boys to whom the story of Napoleon Bonaparte does not appeal. His career is perhaps the most spectacular in all history, because unlike Alexander he was not the son of a king, but a poor boy who rose to greatness strictly on merit—his own push and ability. This fact establishes a kinship between himself and nearly all the boys of any school. They are stirred by his remarkable achievements, and are most likely to catch some of his spirit. A good life of Napoleon written for boys is therefore to be strongly recommended. Brooks's "A Boy of the First Empire" is often found in schools. A boy of high school age can read Abbott's "Life of Napoleon," which, though somewhat partial, and

written over fifty years ago, is one of the most inspiring biographies ever published.

Lives of Lincoln, Grant, Hamilton, Lee, Jackson, Edison, Morse, and other great Americans are excellent for boys; but care must be taken to select the ones that are not too difficult. To start a boy on Nicolay and Hay's "Life of Lincoln," or Badeau's "Grant," or Henderson's "Stonewall Jackson," is to defeat one's purpose at the beginning, for these books are for the mature reader. Miss Nicolay's "Lincoln," and Garland's "Grant," are much better adapted for school use than the more elaborate biographies above mentioned.

For girls the *Life of Alice Freeman Palmer*, by George H. Palmer, is perhaps the most inspiring volume extant. Here we have the story of a little country girl in a poor family making her way amid great privations, who finally won a foremost position among American women. *Lives of Harriet Beecher Stowe*, *Clara Barton*, *Florence Nightingale*, *Mrs. Roger A. Pryor*, and *Marion Harland* are also available.

Of course these volumes are good for all pupils; but for the special purpose of giving guidance and inspiration to bright pupils no agency is more apropos. The teacher should make these volumes a subject of conversation with the pupils whom she is especially trying to reach, and should

in every way endeavor to familiarize all her pupils with the careers of these men and women, especially emphasizing the qualities which made possible their success.

If a pupil has no taste for general biography, he may show an interest in geology or entomology. In this case the teacher should not only encourage his predilection for the study of science, but should furnish him books on science and scientists for his reading. He will surely become interested in Faraday and Davy if he has a liking for chemistry; or in Darwin and Hugh Miller if fond of botany and geology. Lubbock's "Ants, Bees and Wasps" will fascinate the young entomologist. School libraries have not been utilized sufficiently for the advancement of the special interests of pupils. The teacher by addressing the State Librarian can secure books precisely suited to stimulate the special ambitions of the ambitious students, as well as textbooks or manuals of the special subjects.

At the close of the Civil War a great patriotic demonstration was held in Chicago. One of the honored guests on the platform was Jesse R. Grant, the father of General Grant. He was called for—to speak to the audience. Almost overcome by the occasion he exclaimed, "Who am I that you should thus honor me?" The

chairman responded, to the loud applause of the audience, "You are the father of a great son!"

What greater honor could one wish than to have been the teacher of Abraham Lincoln or Alice Freeman Palmer? Yet they were only the ten talent pupils of yesterday! Therefore, regard your bright pupils with great care—who knows but they will be the moving forces of the future?

CHAPTER 5

MAKING PUPILS THOROUGH

Whenever and wherever a writer or lecturer on education wishes to show the superiority of the old education over the new, one of the strongest indictments he makes against our present educational system is in regard to its alleged lack of thoroughness. And no statements will evoke applause more surely than those dealing with that phase of the subject. Here is an example: "Our children to-day are getting a mere smattering of knowledge. The curriculum is so overcrowded that they cannot go to the root of anything. Their little minds are hurried from five minutes of music to five minutes of nature study, then a little cooking, and a little sewing, and a little basketry; and then dramatization, followed by a system of striking the air with the fists, called calisthenics. Before they can get their breath there is a fire drill, followed by playing 'Ring around a rosy' and similar amusements. Then comes paper folding and paper cutting. This done there is clay-modelling and sand-modelling. Next, the children hurry home for lunch which they hurry through so as to hurry back. In the

afternoon the procedure is similar, except that for conscience' sake the teacher asks a few questions as to three times two and five and one, has the pupils go over a few silly sentences called reading, pronounce a few words with half the letters stricken out, called phonetics, has them write *cat* and *dog* for spelling and penmanship, and—school is dismissed. There is no work. It is all play. Everything is sugar-coated. Study is a lost art. The useful is banished from the schoolroom. Fads and frills reign supreme. No wonder our children learn nothing worth while. No wonder they never want to work. They are taught that education is play, that life is amusement, and that people should be anything but serious. When they are through school they are actually unfitted for life. Give us a little more of the old-fashioned thoroughness, the power of 'buckling down' to a proposition and sticking to it until it is solved, the willingness to learn to read fluently, to spell correctly, and to cipher rapidly and accurately." Can you not hear the applause of the audience as our orator wipes his brow and proceeds to his next point?

There are several considerations in this well-worn denunciation of our schools that deserve attention. It may be said in the first place that the whole hackneyed argument is mere camou-

flage. The late Colonel J. P. Sandford used to tell of a lecturer who regularly worked on the sympathies of his audience by telling of how when a boy he had been brutal to his teacher. "I struck her! I struck her! the lecturer would cry, in piteous accents. Col. Sandford said, "The audience cried. I cried. I saw that he was boring for water and I thought I'd help the stream along!"

How easy it would be to call such a speaker to account. The chances are he has not been inside a school in ten years. If he intended to be fair, rather than oratorical, he should present to his audience a copy of a daily program from a representative school of to-day, to show what subjects are actually taught to the pupils and how much time is given to each subject. He would be compelled to admit that at least eighty per cent of the time in our best schools is given to a study of the so-called common branches; that the so-called fads and frills such as music and drawing are in the program not only because educators consider them essential but in response to the demands of the public. Let any school principal announce that these two subjects will not be taught, and see what a storm of protest there will be from the patrons of the school.

The child of ten in the old school could read fluently in a book which he had memorized, but

his sight reading was poor. To-day the same child is conversant with many of the good things in literature, and has a knowledge of many books along with a fluency in talking of them that the old school never furnished. He may not be able to spell so many hard words in columns as his predecessor, but see, in comparison, what kind of letter he writes. He cannot solve such arithmetical puzzles as "Three women had a ball of yarn," or "A man bought one hundred birds for twenty dollars;" but in practical applications of arithmetic and in speed and accuracy he is likely to be just as well grounded as his prototype. The fact is that the critics of to-day usually select the poorest pupils in our schools—the failures—and compare them with the brightest in the old school, the talents and accomplishments of these latter being illumined by the artificial light of a benignant recollection. In the old-time district school of forty pupils which the writer attended, his seat mate, twenty-five years old, plodded along in the third reader—easy reading for the ten-year-olds to-day! Another, of seventeen years, was in the first reader. A third at fifteen had not advanced beyond the alphabet. In the whole school perhaps ten were doing good work. The rest were scattered along the road, a goodly portion barely started beyond "the post."

During the seven years the writer attended this school about eighty different pupils were enrolled. It was considered one of the best schools in the township. Less than two miles away was a high school. Yet of these eighty pupils but five entered that high school, though the work, there, was what would now be considered merely advanced grammar grade work; and of these five only two went farther than that high school. For the large majority of the pupils in that rural school, the teaching was virtually a failure. Instead of lauding the rural schools of the past for their few exceptional successes, we should grieve over the ninety-five per cent, for they did almost less than nothing.

A preacher once asked at a club, "Why is it that the children of to-day cannot read?" He was met by the question, "What evidence have you that they cannot read? Have you visited a school lately to inquire into the matter?" He admitted that he really had no evidence but that his fixed impression was that nowadays pupils are not taught to read. "Call at your local school to-morrow," said his hearer, "and you will quickly revise your impression."

The main purpose of this chapter is, however, not to justify the school of to-day, but to discuss the matter of thoroughness; and it may be stated

at the outset that nobody is truly thorough in anything, and nobody ever was thorough in anything. To be *thorough* is to know a subject *thoroughly*—that is, to know all about it. Is Edison thorough in electricity? By no means. He confesses that he does not know what electricity is, cannot compose a definition of it; and that he is only at the beginning of the knowledge of its possibilities. Was Isaac Newton thorough in science? He himself said that he seemed to himself like a child gathering a few pebbles on the seashore while the great ocean of learning lay unknown beyond. Were the physicians of the last generation thorough? There has been a complete revolution in medical practice since the announcement of the germ theory of disease. We cannot say that historians were thorough, or that business men knew all about business fifty years ago, or that theologians now have nothing to learn that is new, or that farmers were more thorough years ago than now, or that means of travel were brought to thorough perfection in the past generation.

But some people expect children to understand fully everything they study. When a boy comes home and says, "We have just finished fractions," the critical father asks him certain questions, and if he becomes confused the father straightway

charges the school with imparting only a smattering of knowledge. Yet if the same father were asked to explain why in division of fractions the divisor is inverted, he would probably have an unhappy half-hour. Or if he were asked to tell what a figure is, or what a number is, or why the figures represent the respective numbers, he would be helpless. Yet presumably he is now "thorough" in arithmetic.

The better educated the man the less positive and dogmatic he is in his opinions and statements, the less he believes himself "thorough" in any sphere of learning. Benjamin Franklin was one of the wisest of men, and yet he almost never made a positive assertion. The modesty of Charles Darwin and other great scientists is worthy of all emulation. The ease with which the neophyte in any profession settles questions that puzzle the most advanced members thereof is a subject of common amusement. It was said of Mr. Gladstone, probably falsely, that he chewed every mouthful of food at least thirty-two times before swallowing it. This was being "thorough" in mastication; and though everybody admits that adequate mastication is desirable there are very few who are willing to chew until the food becomes insipid and unpalatable.

There is a vice known colloquially as "the sin of finishing." It consists in being "thorough" in occupations. The farmer who harrows a plot of ground until there is no lump of earth larger than a marble is doing thorough work, but wasting much time and labor. The woman who washes her porch until the microscope can detect no grain of dirt does a thorough job, but she is foolish nevertheless. The poet Gray, on becoming a college professor, set out to prepare his lectures with minute care, so much so that at the end of three years he had not finished and delivered even one of them. Milton and Shakespeare might have spent twenty years perfecting any one of their great works, but the world would have been the loser; for in all probability the play or poem would have lost the very thing which *is* Shakespeare, which *is* Milton.

Not only does thoroughness seem impossible of attainment, but it would be undesirable even if possible. Were it a universal law that nothing shall be considered finished until it is perfect there would soon be no professions or occupations, and the world would come to a standstill.

Yet it is to this fetich of thoroughness that we have in the past sacrificed the best interests of our pupils. We tried to make them thorough in geography—and began by teaching them the

nebular hypothesis, the movements of the heavenly bodies, the causes of the changes of seasons, and other similar topics that are within the range of only college students. We taught them the location of every town and city in the whole world, and of every cape, bay, river, and mountain. In spelling we taught all the most difficult words in the language—test words they were called—with brilliant exhibitions of orthoepic skill. In arithmetic we drilled on such soul-stirring topics as arbitration of exchange, equation of payments, the frustums of pyramids and cones, partial payments by the United States rule and the merchants' rule, stocks and bonds, and the yarn and bird puzzles previously mentioned. In history the pupils were required to know the date of every event, minor and major, how many were killed and wounded on both sides in every battle; and they were taught sage judgments on the military talents of Grant and Lee, and on the political wisdom of every statesman. In short, we imparted an enormous quantity of useless information, thereby not only confusing the minds of the pupils but wasting an amount of precious time that could never be recovered. Furthermore, our instruction was so palpably unpractical as to make school work not only a by-word but in some instances a hissing. In our

day every topic to be presented to our pupils should first be able to satisfy the current demand, "What is its use?" If it cannot justify itself on that basis, it has no justification for taking up the precious time of the pupils.

There is another field in which our false conception of thoroughness has done great wrong, and that is the promotions. A very logical father once said to the teacher of his son, "I think it would be a good thing if Charles were not promoted this year; because if he were to go over the work of his grade a second time there are a good many things he would understand better. No matter how high his standing in the various subjects, there is still much that he should learn."

The principal of a small high school, who taught the senior class himself, became discouraged because these pupils were not doing satisfactory work. He feared they would not acquit themselves creditably at the final county examination. After much pondering, with considerable worry, he announced to the class one day (it was in November) that he had decided not to have a graduating class the following June, but to take two years for the work. "By this plan," he explained, "you will not be subjected to over-work. We can go slowly, but surely. We can be thorough; and when you do complete the course, you

will graduate with credit to yourselves and to the school."

"O, excellent young man!" Shylock would have exclaimed had he heard this reasoning. But the pupils went home with heavy hearts; and the next morning there appeared the most dejected and disheartened class that the principal had ever seen. So much was he impressed by the psychological effect of his announcement of the day before that he had the wisdom to reverse himself. At once the class enthusiasm was restored; and at the end of the year one of these pupils stood highest in the entire county.

It may be granted that a child will learn some things by repeating the work of the grade. But think of the loss! His classmates of several years go on while he stays back. He is classified with pupils who were a year behind him and whom he looked upon as "kids." He must confront the derision of the pupils. He is subjected to searching questions and criticisms by his parents and other relatives. He is written down a dullard. He loses heart. He hates his school. He wants to go to another school or quit altogether, and seek a job. His attitude toward people, education and life is altered. Does not this seem to be a very high price to pay for little more thoroughness in last year's work, especially in view of the fact

that a good teacher will in one grade sum up and reinforce all the work of the preceding grade?

In closing this chapter let us frankly admit that there is a portion of truth in the criticism that our schools do not do thorough work. We freely concede that our teaching is not as effective as it should be. Many teachers are not skillful in the fine art of making things clear. But these objections held with ten-fold force against the old time school.

The teacher, whatever her grade, must strive unceasingly for clarity with conciseness and thoroughness. Yet, however aptly she may do her part, she can at best accomplish no more than their undeveloped and inexperienced minds will permit. But she must not refine and repeat and review for the mere sake of a theoretical perfection. She must not "squeeze all the juice" out of school work in the attempt to get every drop; and when the inevitable critic charges one's pupils with lack of thoroughness, she may say to him if she has done really good work, "In what, pray, is anybody thorough?"

CHAPTER 6

“TO UNDERSTAND ALL IS TO PARDON ALL”

Bulwer-Lytton in “Pelham” portrays a character who on first acquaintance seems wholly bad. Glanville is possessed of a consuming hatred against John Tyrrell. He pursues him with fiendish vindictiveness, with the intention of killing him by starvation. He is happy when, as he believes, he has succeeded in his purpose. Later he learns that Tyrrell did not die, and that he inherited a peerage. At once Glanville resumes his malignant designs on Tyrrell’s life. He sends Tyrrell a challenge to a duel which the latter declines. Then Glanville informs him that if he will not fight him in three days, he will take Tyrrell’s life. Glanville does again pursue him with the intention of slaying him; but Tyrrell is set upon by thieves, who kill him; and Glanville has only the satisfaction of coming upon his dead body a few minutes after he is slain. Later the novelist raises the curtain on the wicked deeds of Tyrrell, setting forth how, when Glanville was in France gravely ill, Tyrrell persecuted Glanville’s wife until he drove her into insanity. The reader,

having all the facts before him, no longer wonders at the hatred with which Glanville pursued Tyrrell, and is ready to excuse his thirst for revenge.

"To understand all is to pardon all" is a French aphorism which expresses a philosophy endorsed by some people, especially those who would take away human responsibility. It is not wholly acceptable to most of us; but it contains a large element of truth for all, especially for those who deal with the young.

A boy comes to school with a forbidding demeanor. He is sullen, disagreeable, impolite, rough to the other children, and in general "a hard case." Some teachers begin by saying, "He has no excuse for these acts and attitudes"; and they punish him frequently. Of course this does little if any good. Finally they go to the home to call on the parents. What do they find? A drunken, profane, cruel and lawless father and mother, over whose door-sill the teacher is afraid to pass. Then she no longer wonders at the character of the boy. He is but a product of his native soil. If he were aught else he would be a miracle. Then the teacher gives the boy her sympathy. She has learned of his heredity and environment. She takes the attitude of the physician—studying the case with great care, and prescribing such remedies as may effect a cure. When the boy

feels that she understands and sympathizes with him, he will respond to her treatment. In this way his heart may be reached, and he may in time become a useful citizen.

A certain boy of eleven was considered incorrigible. Teachers would place at the blackboard the letter *a*, and ask him to name it. He would immediately make grimaces and contortions that would set the entire school laughing, and was as liable to say *u* as *a*. Of course he was often punished, for the teachers were entirely satisfied that he was deliberately perverse. But one day a specialist examined this boy. He found that the nerves of the two eyes did not meet properly in the brain, as in normal people; that the only way in which the boy could get correct glimpses of objects was by making a gyratory motion of the head; and that instead of being perverse, he was making agonizing efforts to respond to the teacher's directions. If they had known, they would have pardoned all.

In modern surgical practice there are numerous instances of operations on the skull of young people of criminal tendencies and habits that have completely changed the character of the individuals by removing the pressure on part of the brain. There are probably many other instances of so-called bad boys and bad girls who could be simi-

larly helped if the experiment were made. Surely in all cases of waywardness occasioned by accidents or by malconstruction of the skull (for which the child is in no way responsible) there should be a minimum of blame and of punishment. Patient direction there must be, but without harshness.

There was in a certain school a case of persistent tardiness that was the more annoying because the boy concerned would never give any reasons for his tardiness. Investigation later developed the fact that he had no mother, but lived with his father and an infant sister. He rose at four in the morning, did some house work, prepared breakfast for his father and himself, rushed out to deliver the morning papers, returned to waken and care for his sister and wash the dishes; and with all these duties he could not always reach school on time. As a twelve-year old boy is naturally reticent about revealing such matters, he was misunderstood until the facts became known.

The inability of a pupil to study, or the tendency to be irritable, may be due to a bad night or an empty stomach. Too many of our pupils come to school without breakfast. These are apt to become languid and to have headaches.

A mother came to a high school principal one

day and said, "I am ashamed to tell you this, but in justice to my daughter I want you to know that her father is a drinking man. When he comes home late at night more or less under the influence of liquor, we have much trouble with him; and my daughter becomes so wrought up nervously that she has a sleepless night. I am sure that in school she must be excitable, and sometimes may be inattentive and preoccupied; so I hope you will attribute her peculiar actions to the trouble we both must endure at home, a condition which we cannot remedy. Please be as easy with her as you can, because I don't feel she is altogether to blame for her state of mind."

A pupil may have inherited a violent temper, which sometimes may get the better of him. He may occasionally burst out in the schoolroom and cause trouble. Yet it may be that the boy is making a strong effort to control himself. It may be that out of twenty occasions on which he would ordinarily have become violent he restrained himself in nineteen. If we knew that, we should not be severe on account of the twentieth. To tame such a fiery trait as a strong temper is difficult, and if it gets the upper hand only occasionally, that is a matter for congratulation rather than censure.

It is said of Henry Ward Beecher that his

church officers once remonstrated with him for introducing so many funny stories in his sermons. "Gentlemen," was the reply, "if you only knew how many funny stories I keep back, you would think I am doing pretty well!" The boy who has a strong temper that sometimes gets away from him may be worth to the world a dozen of the milk-and-water boys who do not have sufficient temper ever to get into trouble.

If we knew the effort that some pupils put forth on their lessons without success, we would be more charitable toward their failures. Take a pupil who stands low in his grammar class. He may be anxious to do better. He puts two hours every evening on his grammar lesson, but somehow he cannot master it. This in itself is discouraging. If in addition the teacher on the next day makes disparaging remarks on his recitation, with odious comparisons, or resorts to sarcasm or ridicule, an injustice is done the boy that is wholly uncalled for; and especially if he is accused of not trying, although he is working harder than any other member of the class, he feels the injustice and may become thoroughly disheartened.

In a certain high school the teacher of Latin was accustomed, at the beginning of each recitation, to ask of each pupil individually, "How long

did you study this lesson?" If a student had devoted two hours to the lesson, yet was unable to translate even one sentence, you may be sure he was treated with all consideration, because he had done his best—which is, of course, all that anybody can do.

Every teacher in her personal life is liable to be misunderstood. She may be considered parsimonious when she is only denying herself in order to assist in the support of her home, or to help a brother or a sister through college. The people with whom she boards may consider her eccentric because she practices hygienic habits of living. They may call her "finicky" because she is refined, and sensitive to coarseness. They think she is exclusive because she spends some of her evenings in privacy, and because she does not make public her private affairs. Some or all of these criticisms are likely to be the lot of the teacher some time during her career. They are the common experience of many. Some things are not to be explained to the public; and if they were there would still be imagined cause for misinterpretation and misrepresentation.

The point is that teachers must not be deterred from self-development by the criticisms of ignorant or thoughtless people. The teacher must be the judge of what is best for herself. She realizes

what she must do if she is to succeed in her profession, and to prepare herself for an ever broadening sphere of usefulness. To live according to the dictates of those who have little knowledge of the intellectual world, and whose ideals are narrow, is to invite disaster to one's career. The teacher must remain true to her own ideals. This does not mean that she need give offense to anyone. Bulwer has well said, "There is no situation which a little tact cannot turn to our own account: manage *yourself* well, and you may manage all the world." And Emerson says, "To be great *is* to be misunderstood."

The same observations apply to our pupils. They, too, have their little secrets. Some are sensitive and shy. There are some who would face severe punishment rather than divulge certain facts that other pupils would tell without compunction. Let us respect these reserved pupils, and not be too hasty in judging them adversely. They, too, are often greatly misunderstood. In dealing with children as with adults, there is need of a broad and intelligent charity.

A good rule in dealing with pupils is to give them the benefit in case of doubt. George Eliot took the position that "it is surely better to pardon too much than to condemn too much." Children will have a higher opinion of the teacher

who makes allowances for proneness to yield to temptation than to one who excuses nothing, and who always puts a bad construction on their deeds. The slang expression, "Have a heart!" is an excellent motto in school government. If adults are liable to err, how much more children! When the teacher is quite sure that she is herself a perfect woman she may properly expect to find here and there a perfect child. But for most of us, the best we can do is to exercise forbearance toward the common failings of our fellows, the young as well as their elders.

CHAPTER 7

THE TEACHER AND THE SCHOOL BOARD

In schools not having a superintendent the teacher has a direct association with the board of education. There are several aspects of this relationship with which the teacher should familiarize herself. Otherwise she will almost certainly involve herself in unpleasant experiences. For example, when a teacher secures an appointment she should preserve the letter offering the appointment. This letter usually states the name of the position, the length of the term, and the salary. Her acceptance of the offer, together with said letter of the board, constitutes a legal contract in many states, provided the board of education has regularly adopted rules governing teachers. If the board does not have such rules, the teacher should request a written contract. If the teacher has no contract, she is at the mercy of the board. The board can dismiss her at a minute's notice with or without cause. They can transfer her to any other grade or school under their control, reduce her salary, pay her nothing until the end of the year—in fact, do almost anything except the things forbidden under the criminal laws.

But if the teacher has a legal contract, she is secure.

It is also true that without a contract the board is at the mercy of the teacher, so far as leaving her position is concerned. She may go without giving notice, and the board has no redress, the fault lying with the board, because it neglected to make a contract with the teacher before the school term began. An experience of fourteen years in a certain county having 250 teachers, in which 24 taught each year without contracts, fails to reveal a single instance in which a board of education took an unfair advantage of a teacher in respect to dismissal; but on the other hand practically every year there were at least two or three instances of teachers leaving without notice, who could have been held, or penalized, if there had been contracts. This would indicate that boards of education are more honorable in their dealings with teachers in this respect than are teachers with boards.

The rules of boards of education, and the regular contracts, usually contain a clause to the effect that either party to said contract may terminate the same by giving thirty days' notice to the other. Under such contract a teacher has a legal right to leave her position at any time during the year after having given the board the stipulated

notice. But has she the moral and professional right to leave during the term? Here the answer must be emphatically in the negative.

Suppose a teacher were to receive from her board on October 1st, a letter stating that her services would not be required after November 1st, giving no reason. Would she not feel that she had received unfair treatment? Would she not demand an explanation? Would she consider it right to be deprived of her position when she might not be able to get another for six months? Would the public adjudge her a failure? Conversely the same objections would obtain should the teacher resign on thirty days' notice. She would be just as unfair to the board in quitting during the term, even on due notice, as the board would be in dismissing her. She would be putting the board to the trouble of getting another teacher when good teachers are scarce. She would dislocate the school work. There would be disconcerting "lost motion" while the new teacher was getting broken in. The greatest objection to a change of teachers during term time is the injury done the pupils. The teacher certainly has duties toward the school board and toward her superior officers, but her primary obligation is to the children. Their welfare is in her charge, and she may not lightly throw off that responsibility by

a mere thirty-days' notice. If by quitting she retards their progress, she will have committed a wrong against the children that neither time nor effort might repair. The better her work the greater the wrong. Should she withdraw, say in November, she would have just then become acquainted with her charges, and have arrived at the psychological moment to do effective work. The new teacher would be at a disadvantage measured not by the two months only, but also by the two following months requisite to establish similar relations between teacher and class.

Moreover, to resign one position during the year so as to accept another is to be the loser in the long run, as far as one's personal career is concerned. What if one should desire to return to the same city or county a year or two afterward. Specific instances could be mentioned in which the superintendent wrote to such teachers: "You left us during the school term. We prefer teachers who are willing to stay the whole year." A certain normal graduate resigned her position on December 1st without a day's notice, and without stating a reason. Several months later a city superintendent wrote to her former county superintendent as to this teacher's qualifications for a position for which she had applied. The reply was: "This teacher left on December 1st

without a day's notice, assigned no reason for her action, and did not even notify me. Hence I decline to recommend her."

Of course, there may be proper reasons for resigning during the year. Such are the impossibility of getting a suitable boarding place, sickness of the teacher or in her family, and other reasons which may be named. It is the hasty, ill-considered resignation, because difficulties have arisen, or because of a chance to secure a higher salary elsewhere, which is unprofessional and not to be countenanced. Lincoln said of Grant, "He sticks through thick and thin. I like that kind of man." So a superintendent likes the teacher who "sticks," and he usually sees to it that she is properly rewarded.

Another difficulty between teacher and school board may grow out of the case of a suspended pupil. Here one of two things should be done. Either the teacher should send the board a written statement of the history of the case or, what is much better, should present the statement in person at the hearing before the committee or before the board. It is very probable that the pupil and his parents would be present at such a hearing. But if the teacher were not there, a wholly misleading presentation of the case might be made. Boards of education sometimes decide

such cases on the testimony of pupil and parents, forgetting that the teacher should be called upon to state her version of the case. Accordingly the teacher, unless forbidden to be present, should attend the hearing, whether invited or not.

A teacher applied for a graded school position in June, was elected, was formally notified, and wrote a letter of acceptance. This constituted a contract, as the board had rules governing teachers. In August she received an offer of a better position in a larger town. She at once sent her resignation to the employing board, stating no reason for her action. The secretary notified her that she would be expected to fulfill her contract unless she should state reasons satisfactory to the board. She appealed to the county superintendent for advice. He informed her that the board was within its rights in declining to grant her resignation, and that her cavalier conduct had made an unfavorable impression. Her proper course would have been to explain personally to the secretary in advance how much it would mean to her to be enabled to accept the new offer, and to ask her release as a favor. Few boards under the circumstances would stand in the way of a teacher's advancement if her resignation were tendered even so late as four weeks before the opening of school. If the board had

notified this teacher, say, on August 1st that her services would not be required, giving no reason, she would have felt greatly injured. A good rule in such cases is to keep in mind the other man's ox, as mentioned by Æsop.

In another school district the board of education on May 1st notified several teachers that they had not been reappointed for the next year. One of these teachers, who had served in that district five years, came to the county superintendent for advice. He knew her to be an excellent teacher, and that her failure to be reappointed was due to misinformation that had come to the board as to her loyalty to the course of study. He advised her to call personally on the members of the board, ask for the reasons for her non-election, and offer a frank statement of her views on the course of study. Few members of the board knew her personally. When she interviewed them they were impressed with her candor and her personality; and at the next meeting of the board she was reappointed with votes to spare. In the event of trouble between the teacher and anyone else, be it parent, board of education or supervisor, nothing is more effective toward arriving at an understanding than a personal interview.

In general it may be said that a board of education will look askance at a teacher who is prone

to complain. They like one who has the favor of the community. Frequent complaints from patrons, make insecure the teacher's tenure. The board likes a satisfied teacher and a satisfied community. Let the teacher refrain from requesting too insistently the purchase of everything she thinks the school needs. All of us in our personal lives must get along without some things we should like to have, things which would perhaps be very beneficial to us. So with teachers and their classes. Not always may the board feel justified in burdening the community with the cost of some new equipment, however desirable it may seem to the enthusiastic young teacher. Let us do the best we can, but in any event, keep cheerful.

CHAPTER 8

THE TEACHER AND THE SUPERINTENDENT

In towns having a superintendent the teacher seldom comes in contact with the members of the board. The matter of appointments is usually in the superintendent's hands. He represents the board. Hence the suggestions already given in the chapter on "The Teacher and the School Board" are applicable as between teacher and superintendent also, in so far as contracts and resignations are concerned.

Besides the business relation, there is a professional relation that is of the utmost importance. The superintendent is charged with the responsibility for good schools. Hence every teacher is bound to be loyal to him—to administer faithfully the course of study, and to carry out the prescribed rules and regulations. She should be willing to co-operate for the good of the school even if asked to do things not definitely prescribed in her duties. The superintendent must every day do many things not nominated in the bond; and the good teacher will not be less complaisant.

For instance: In a certain graded school one of

the teachers was asked by the principal to step out of her room to oversee the entrance of pupils three times per day. She failed frequently to be at her post, and when spoken to by the principal became indignant. This feeling led to other acts of insubordination. The result was that although a normal graduate of considerable teaching ability, she lost her position by the unanimous vote of the board.

Superintendents like teachers who are punctual. They should be on hand in the morning at the appointed time. Their school registers and reports should be in the office as requested. They should dismiss their classes promptly. They should not be late for teachers' meetings. In other words, they should be business-like. In many cases the superintendent's report is based on the sum of all the teachers' reports. Hence one tardy teacher may interfere very seriously with the work of the superintendent.

Superintendents like teachers who are frank and truthful. The superintendent who does not is exceptional. Conversely, good teachers do not care to work in a system in which truthful criticism is not welcome. Therefore, when the books assigned to her class are unsuitable, or the topics in the course of study are too difficult for the class, the teacher should take the earliest oppor-

tunity to state the case in private to her superintendent. Of course she must be faithful to his decision; but if he directs her to continue in work that is beyond the class he alone is responsible for the results. She is responsible for her best efforts to teach the lessons effectively.

A superintendent likes self-reliant teachers. If all petty cases of disorder were brought to him to settle he would have time for little else. The teacher, so far as she can, must save him from annoyance. She must have the courage to deal with the ordinary mischiefs, and the knowledge requisite to carry out the course of study. In short, she must manage to run her room smoothly. Not to keep running to the superintendent is best for herself and her pupils, and is best for the school as a whole.

It is, however, very important that difficult cases be discussed with the superintendent before they have gone too far. Often he can give helpful advice. He may have known the pupil longer than the teacher has, and be able to suggest treatment based on that knowledge. At any rate, if the case should require drastic action by the superintendent, it were well that he have full knowledge of it from its very beginning.

A difficult situation for a superintendent arises when a teacher lays down an ultimatum to her

class or to individual pupils. For instance, the persistent disobedience of a girl may lead her to send the girl from the room and to declare: "You shall not enter my room again until you have apologized to me before the class and promised to do better." The culprit may tell her parents that she has been expelled from school. The parents ordinarily would bring her before the superintendent and ask for an explanation, and he would summon the teacher and hear her statement of the case. But what can he do to remedy the difficulty? The teacher has definitely committed herself by publicly stating the terms on which the girl may return to the class. The parents may declare that to apologize in public would needlessly humiliate the daughter, and threaten to carry the case before the board of education unless some other form of discipline be employed. The superintendent may believe the teacher's action to have been too hasty. Yet if he should send the girl back to the room without having apologized the prestige of the teacher would be shattered. This is by no means a theoretical situation. It is a situation which frequently occurs in schools.

The simple truth is that a teacher should not issue an ultimatum. Presumably she would be in an irritated frame of mind when dismissing the pupil from the room, and in danger of too harsh

a judgment. Merely to dismiss the pupil from the class would be sufficient for the moment. At a convenient time later she should bring the case before the superintendent, who would determine the proper procedure. If an apology were to be exacted, the teacher and the superintendent would be at one, even though the responsibility were his. But to be compelled to defend a teacher whom he deems only half right, and who might have taken a more moderate course, is a predicament difficult indeed. In fact, a superintendent would be justified in announcing at the beginning of the school year, that any teacher who should issue an ultimatum to a pupil or a class without having previously consulted him would have his support only if he should judge her action to have been justified by the circumstances. Ordinarily it is the part of the superintendent to support his teachers; but it is also his duty to see that the pupils are treated justly.

Superintendents do not like to have teachers "stir up trouble." For very good reason Miss A may receive a larger salary increase than Miss B. If the latter, on learning this fact, should complain to other teachers about it, or go to the members of the board, she would create an unpleasant situation. Instead, let her go to the superintendent. He would know the reasons for

the action of the board, and could advise her wisely. It may be that he would advise her to see some of the members of the board—which would be quite within her rights. However, she should first learn all the facts, and if possible get the endorsement or at least the good will of the superintendent. Assuredly she should not attempt or do anything likely to spread dissatisfaction throughout the teaching corps.

An excellent teacher who was an agitator as above described applied for a position in a certain city. Her practice of criticising the superintendent and the board was discovered, and she failed to receive the appointment. The superintendent said of her, "I have no doubt Miss C is a good teacher; but if she calls to see me I shall tell her frankly that I am afraid of her."

The superintendent is the court of justice when differences arise. In a departmental system, for example, questions of procedure arise on which there may be honest differences of opinion. There can be no compromise. Perhaps two teachers favor one course and two the other. The superintendent must decide. Having declared his decision the question should be considered settled. The teachers who lose their case should respect the decision, and should work on with the same fidelity as those who win. It is not necessary

that they change their opinions; but it *is* necessary that they carry out the plan decided upon by the one in authority. This is part of the "give and take" of daily life. Nobody has his own way at all times. It is better to have a superintendent who decides things, even though he make an occasional mistake, than to have one who is undecided or vacillating.

CHAPTER 9

REPORTS TO PARENTS

There are two kinds of reports that should go to parents, one at the end of every month, the other when some special circumstance in discipline or study arises. Some school districts furnish blank cards for regular reports. If so, the teacher will use them. But if she has a choice, it is suggested that she employ a much simpler form than that which is in common use.

There is much to be said against the marking of any pupil on the basis of percentage. First, it entails much labor, besides the strain on the teacher. Many teachers dread the end of the month because of the long hours to be spent in complex averaging—necessary to arrive at the conclusion, say, that Mary deserves 86 and John 87 in history! Secondly, the average parent seldom studies out what the 87 stands for in the mysterious complication of the report card. Some consider it good, others poor. The majority care little for the card, often signing it mechanically with scarcely a thought concerning its message. In such cases the teacher's work in marking the card has been to no purpose. Thirdly, these cards

often stir up strife. If John is marked 87 in history and Mary, a neighbor's child, 86, Mary's mother "wants to know" why her child has a lower mark than John; and is quite likely "to opine" that the teacher shows favoritism toward John because his father is the mayor of the town while Mary's father is only a laborer.

We all know that no two teachers will award a like percentage to a given paper. Indeed, investigation has disclosed, in a certain instance, that a paper in geometry marked 95 by a high school teacher of that subject was marked 55 by another teacher; and in other instances equally glaring disparities. The percentages on a given report card are merely an individual teacher's estimate, and arrived at by methods never standardized. It were a miracle should two teachers, acting independently, award identical percentages to the same pupil's card.

Is it not strange that custom, tradition, and a certain slavish conservatism should so control school boards and schools, superintendents and teachers, the profession and the laity, that they seem unable to break away from this cumbersome, uncertain, variable, even cryptic system, and restrain them from substituting some simple procedure in its stead—some system easy to formulate, and intelligible and informing to parents?

Such a plan might be embodied in "A Letter to Parents." Some years ago the board of education in a certain town supplied the teachers with a form letter as follows:

Letter to Parents

Blanktown, ———, 19 .

Mr. ———

Dear Sir: I am pleased to report that the work of your ——— for the month of ——— has been satisfactory in all subjects.

There has been special improvement in ———

Remarks: ———

Yours very truly,

Teacher.

Parent.

Parents please sign and return. Comments by parents are invited and may be written on the back of this sheet.

If the work of a pupil were unsatisfactory, say in history, the teacher would write after the word *subjects* "except in history." Under "Remarks" the teacher could write many things, such as:

"John seems to be trying very hard to get his history, but he does not seem able to grasp it. I shall give him special help this month."

"John's behavior is always so good that he sets an excellent example to the class."

"Do you not think Mary is studying too much? She seems to be pale and not strong. Her work is so good that she could easily get along with less home study."

"I am sorry to say that William is not interested in the work in English. He is so carelèss in his spelling and language that he spoils what might otherwise be a good paper. Will you not help assist him in this part of his work?"

A report card should not be a complaint card. Notice that the form just described emphasizes the good points. It trends toward encouragement. It minimizes the shortcomings. Further, every parent will read it and understand it and be interested in it. Lastly, the teacher would fill it out for each pupil without comparison, expressed or implied, to the other pupils. Three-fourths of the stress and strain upon the teacher herself will be eliminated when the percentage report fetich is discarded in favor of some simple and rational system.

These reports, when returned to the teacher, should be carefully preserved. If at the end of the year a child had not been promoted, and the parent had complained about it to the principal or to the board, the teacher could justify herself

by exhibiting the ten reports showing that many times she had called attention to the deficiencies, and that the parent, let us suppose, had not ventured any remarks or offered any suggestions on the back of the sheet. The parent, thus shown to have been cognizant of the unsatisfactory work, without having taken steps to co-operate with the teacher, would have difficulty in inducing the board to reverse the teacher's decision.

If one's school board should not furnish these blank letters, the teacher may write or mimeograph them in several abbreviated forms. Probably one-half the letters would be something like this: "William has done good work throughout this month." One-fourth of the letters would need perhaps twice as many words. The remaining fourth would need to be more in detail, and should be carefully worded, bearing in mind the impression to be made on the child as well as on the parent.

The occasional notes that every teacher has to write, as well as those mentioned above, should always begin with a favorable statement. Suppose William's behavior is wretched, and his work is very poor except in arithmetic. The teacher who feels she must report the state of affairs to the home might truthfully begin her letter thus:

Mr. Blank, Sir: Your son William is the worst behaved boy in my room, and the meanest case I have ever had to deal with in all my experience. He is never satisfied unless he has all the other pupils stirred up. He doesn't pay the slightest attention to anything I say. His lessons are all very poor except one, arithmetic. This conduct cannot go on any longer. I am at the end of my patience, etc., etc.

Another, and tactful, way of broaching the same matter in a letter might be as follows:

"Mr. Blank — My dear Mr. Blank: I am very happy to report to you that William has made a most excellent record in arithmetic this month. Indeed I can truthfully say that no one in the class can equal him when it comes to solving a knotty problem. I should think if he keeps on progressing in mathematics he might some day become a civil engineer.

When it comes to his other studies, I regret that I cannot speak so favorably. He does not take much interest in them. This may be due to the fact that he is an energetic boy, full of life, but not inclined to keep himself quiet. Indeed, his activity often has a bad effect on the class; for the other pupils are apt to follow his example. I have spoken to him several times, but have not seen much improvement. I am sure you will feel as I do, that he should try to make a good

record in all subjects, so as to be a credit to himself and to his family. If he can be induced to apply himself more earnestly to his lessons, his conduct will naturally correct itself.

Thanking you in advance for your co-operation, I am,

Yours very truly,

Now this last letter may be too bland. It may be too much of the "soft soap" variety; but it is proffered here to show how the same thing may be said with totally different results. The parent, who would be angered by the first letter would doubtless be won over by the very beginning of the second. He would feel that the teacher was interested in his son, and that her letter was dictated by a spirit of helpfulness and not of anger. Don't make the letters of complaint unduly harsh. Smooth down the rough edges. Eschew extravagant statements. Understate rather than overstate the shortcomings.

On or about April 1st the teacher should send a letter to all parents of pupils whose promotion in June is doubtful. This is in addition to the regular monthly letter sent out on that date. There are two reasons for this, one to endeavor to insure the promotion of the pupil, the other to protect the teacher. When such notices are not sent out, and the first definite news of failure to

secure promotion comes to parents on the last day of school, they have ground for saying, "Why didn't you let me know a month or two ago that my child was in danger of failing in promotion? I would then have taken steps to improve his work. Now it is too late to do anything." But if parents receive a warning on April 1st, both they and the child are brought face to face with a situation which they alone can remedy; and in three months much can be done. Many a pupil through such a warning has been led to brace up, who otherwise might have failed of promotion. The teacher protects herself by this method because having given ample warning to both pupil and parents she could not justly be charged with indifference or neglect. A printed form used for this purpose in the school previously cited in this chapter was as follows:

My dear Mr. ———: I regret to inform you that at the present time the promotion of your ———
——— in June is doubtful.

The subjects in which he lacks are ———.

The reasons for this low standing, as far as we know, are ———.

As there are still three months of school, we hope you will do what you can to help us bring
——— work up so that he may secure promotion.

Yours very truly,
—————

CHAPTER 10

DEALING WITH INDIVIDUAL PARENTS

A teacher of some years' experience was once heard to remark, "If parents will keep away from me, I shall be sure to keep away from them." This is the attitude of a decreasing number of teachers, because we are coming to realize more and more that the closer the co-operation between parents and teachers the better for the children. Parents have not only a right but a duty to call on the teacher when things appear to be going wrong. If, instead of complaining to the neighbors about the teacher, parents would first call on the teacher and hear the facts about a given difficulty much unpleasantness might be avoided.

It is a good rule for the teacher, whenever possible, to call on the parent in case of trouble, rather than to wait for the parent to call on her. It is preferable that the first account of the difficulty come to the parent from the lips of the teacher rather than from the child. Often this cannot readily be accomplished. In that event it were best in some instances not to bring things to a head with the child but simply to postpone the issue until the parent has been interviewed.

If the teacher succeeds in getting the parent's ear in advance of the child the parent will nearly always give the teacher a favorable judgment, which the child cannot later change by his side of the story.

There are, however, in nearly all communities, certain persons whose visits at the schools, to register complaints, are notoriously frequent. No matter how disagreeable they may be, and how flimsy their fault finding, they must be received by the teacher, and courteously treated. There is no escape, and the main purpose of this chapter is to suggest some ways of dealing with them.

The teacher's first rule should be that she must not and will not lose her temper. She sees a parent coming, perhaps in anger. So much the more must she steady herself. "Nothing in the world shall cause me to lose my poise," must be her resolve. If possible, some interesting topic of conversation should be introduced not relating to school affairs. People "in a state of mind," coming with complaints, have been known to be diverted by some item of current news, or even by politics or baseball, until they have almost forgotten the purpose of their call; and, when finally coming to the point, their choler cooled, their normal state resumed, they have been known

actually to commend the teacher for the very conditions or actions they came to criticize!

If this course should prove to be impossible, let the teacher cordially say, "What can I do for you this morning, Mr. Blank?" Then let Mr. Blank give free rein to his feelings. If he becomes excited, and you keep cool, you have won the day. The longer and the more excitedly he talks the more things he will say that are untrue, or exaggerated, or discourteous. After he has fully expressed himself, you can go back over his statements and by cross-questioning (always respectfully, but with dignity mingled with good nature) show that some remarks were hasty, others based doubtless on misinformation, or misunderstanding, and some possibly deserving of thoughtful consideration, with a view, if justified, to inaugurating proper remedies. In many instances one can demolish the entire complaint in this way. However, it is also wise to bring forward evidence of which he has been ignorant, so as to show that you have nothing to conceal, and that there is ample warrant for what you have done in those cases in which you know you have been right. You must remember that you are not trying to prove your case before a court of justice, but before a person who may be in an unreasonable frame of mind, besides being an inter-

ested party—which renders the task doubly difficult.

Mrs. Poyser, in that famous chapter in “Adam Bede” in which she spoke her mind to Squire Donnithorne, says, “There’s no pleasure in living if you’re to be corked up forever, and only dribble your mind out by the sly, like a leaky barrel.” To interrupt a man bent on expressing hard feelings is usually to increase his anger. Let him alone until his ardor has somewhat cooled. Not the least of the resulting benefits is that he will feel “somewhat better after he is through.”

One such parent came to school at one o’clock with fire in his eye. He stalked up to the principal and said in a peremptory tone, “I want to know why you sent my boy home for making a loud noise in his room at noon when he wasn’t in the room at all.” The principal calmly replied, “There are two things to be said in reply to your request. In the first place, your boy was not sent home. He ran home against our wishes because he feared he would be punished for striking a boy on the playground. As for the loud noise in the room, I know nothing about it.” The father, of course, was completely nonplussed. Then after a minute’s silence he said, “Wait till I get home! I’ll show him better than to deceive me like that!”

As all good rules have exceptions, so this in-

junction, always to be polite, has its limitations. For example, there was a lady who persisted in interfering between the teacher and her daughter. The latter was inclined to shirk her duties, and the mother habitually made excuses for her, justified her, and reflected on the teacher. The principal usually had a weekly call from her. If one difficulty was adjusted another would be raised the following week. One day, when the mother asked the teacher why it was that there was always trouble between her and her daughter, the teacher replied, "I have no trouble at all with your daughter. My trouble is with you. If you would only let us alone and cease your interference there would be no further difficulty." The mother was highly indignant, and for that reason would have nothing more to do with the teacher; and, true to the teacher's prediction, she and the child got along nicely together thereafter.

Burke remarks that there comes a time when forbearance ceases to be a virtue. There are occasions when it is the teacher's right and duty to confront chronic complainants with plain facts. They are constitutionally awry. No man living can please them. They must occasionally be "settled off;" and the teacher who does it need seldom fear the consequences. In the case above referred to, when the incident was recounted in-

formally to the board of education, the teacher was highly praised for her courage.

In dealing with parents it is highly important that the teacher evince a desire to do justice, to be fair to all concerned. In considering a complaint, the teacher's part is not so much to carry her point, as to do the right thing. Now it may happen that the teacher is partially or wholly in the wrong. She should be the first to admit it if shown her error, and should hasten to make appropriate amends. In no better way can she illustrate the spirit of justice and candor. She wishes her pupils to admit their mistakes; and she will be wise to set them an example whenever the occasion arises.

In the case of a pupil whose progress in his studies is unsatisfactory, a precaution of importance is to preserve some of the written work that shows incompetency. There is no other proof equal to written proof. Oral statements can be questioned or explained away; but statements of fact set down in black and white are not so readily discounted or distorted or denied.

Once a gentleman complained to the board of education in regard to his daughter. He declared that she should be in high school, but that the prejudice of her three eighth grade teachers kept her from being promoted. A committee of the

board was appointed to hear the case. The three teachers presented to this committee some samples of the papers the girl had written in composition, spelling, history, geography, and other subjects. The committee at once saw the situation clearly. Many of her written statements were inaccurate or entirely wrong, and much of her language was disjointed, almost incoherent. The committee promptly dismissed the complaint, informing the father that the only doubt in their minds was whether the girl should not be placed in the seventh grade.

Another father called at the office one day, not in a spirit of complaint, but to learn for himself why his son had not been promoted. The principal drew forth the final examination papers and showed the very poor spelling and other defects. The father was entirely satisfied that no injustice had been done to his boy, and furthermore gained added confidence in the fairness of the principal.

As a rule, inquiring parents are entitled to a thorough investigation of the matter in hand. If their child is not to be promoted, they have a right to know the reason why. If the child has been punished, his parents have a right to a full explanation on request. Nothing is gained by concealment, or by a curt disregard of the wishes of the parents. The teacher who desires to do

the right thing need hide nothing, nor evade any consequence. She may willingly throw open all records in the case, and explain the ground of her action. Even though parents find fault with her course, they should not be given grounds to accuse her of lack of frankness.

In order that the school work may run smoothly and complaints be discounted in advance, it were well that the teacher become acquainted with the parents of all her pupils early in the year, before any difficulties have arisen. This requires time and effort, but it pays. In one school three eighth grade teachers, who under the departmental plan each had charge of over one hundred pupils, began in the fall to call on the parents of all these pupils. The principal excused them from teachers' meetings and other extra work until the entire round of visits had been made. At the end of the year the three teachers testified to the great value of these early calls on parents. Much misunderstanding may be prevented through this acquaintanceship. Without it no teacher can attain her proper status in the community. If an ounce of prevention be worth a pound of cure, here is a province for its application. A prominent judge once remarked that a lawyer's success depends largely on the extent of his favorable acquaintanceships. The same statement may with equal truth be made of the teacher.

CHAPTER 11

THE TEACHER'S TEMPER

Thomas Carlyle has said, "Blessed is the man who has found his work, let him ask no other blessedness." One is almost tempted to paraphrase Carlyle's sentence and say, "Blessed is the man who has a strong temper."

The man who lacks temper seldom has much else. He is an invertebrate. He lacks power, poise, ambition. He may be one of the "merely good" men, who are "harmless as a dove," and without dynamic force. Leaders of men, and even active followers, have driving power, which is invariably associated with strong temper. President Eliot said of Alice Freeman Palmer that "she had the power of a mighty anger without the weakness of an irritable disposition." The temper of George Washington is historical. So is that of Alexander Hamilton and of Andrew Jackson. Strong men and strong women always have strong tempers.

A high school senior was several times sent to the principal's office because she had some trouble with her teacher. The difficulty was caused by the fact that the girl did not like the teacher, and

spoke hastily to her when irritated. The third time this girl arrived at the office, the principal said to her, "Anna, have you ever thanked God for that splendid temper of yours?" Anna was much surprised, and said that her temper was the source of all her troubles; that it caused many unfortunate collisions between herself and mother as well as her teacher, and that she often wished she had as little temper as some of the other girls who seemed never to get into difficulties.

"By no means!" exclaimed the principal, "Your temper is a priceless treasure. It is that which accounts for the poise which distinguishes you in a crowd. Any one looking at you is at once impressed with your apparent strength and pronounced individuality. You would not like to be as spineless as a jelly fish. *You* would be a woman who can do something and be something. Your fault is not that you have a strong temper, but that you fail to control it. Your temper is like a spirited horse that is apt to run wild when the master gives it a little rein. It is like a powerful engine that can draw a long train bearing hundreds of passengers at great speed across the continent, but can cause calamity when released from the control of the engineer.

"Now I understand perfectly that I am giving you a big job, but I have confidence that you are

equal to it. I wish you to go back to your class and from this time on hold your temper in check. When you feel yourself becoming irritated, say to yourself 'Hold your horses!' and you will by and by be able to control your temper so well that the collisions with your mother, your teachers, and your friends will be a thing of the past."

Anna seemed greatly impressed, and promised to make the attempt. She had no further difficulty with her teacher. After graduation she took a normal school course, taught several years, and then established a home. Five years later the principal chanced to meet her on a train. The conversation turned on the interview above detailed; and the lady stated that she was glad to say that she had entire control of her temper, as a happy experience of five years would corroborate.

We often hear of a person with a bad temper, or with a good temper. Properly speaking the words bad and good do not apply to temper. There is no moral quality in temper any more than there is in the hand or the foot.

Archbishop Cranmer, when accused of heretical teachings, signed a recantation. Later, when brought to the stake, he held his right hand into the flames, saying, "Let this hand perish first because it was guilty of signing that wicked

paper." Of course Cranmer was entirely wrong in attributing guilt to his hand. The right hand was no more guilty than the left hand. It was no more guilty than the cannon ball that kills soldiers in warfare. The instrument is always non-moral. It is the mind that is moral or immoral. Thus the temper is strong, medium, or weak. "Bad" temper is an incorrect way of characterizing a strong temper that is not properly controlled. "Good" temper is often nothing more than a weak temper.

The proverbial teacher of a generation ago was usually pictured as a man or a woman of an irritable, irascible disposition, full of impulses, eccentric, explosive, sarcastic. However unjust this characterization, it persisted for many years. At one time the English people frightened their children into silence by invoking the Black Douglas to visit upon them some dire punishment. Later Napoleon Bonaparte was invoked for the same purpose, followed in the moor district by the reddeleman. It is in the memory of many people that prior to the school age children were told in many homes, "Just wait till you get to school. Then you'll have to stand around! Then look out for breakers!" Before they began going to school some children had as great a dread of the teacher as of the bogey man. It is undeniable

that there were many fearsome teachers. It is also true that for the most part they have passed with their generation.

Control of temper is gained through will-power, through strenuous and constant practice. If one seldom has experiences that invite loss of temper, he may be slow to learn control.

The teacher will always have some pupils who are troublesome; she is sure to have trying moments with her supervisory officers, fellow-teachers, and with parents. There are hourly occasions for scolding, fault-finding, sarcasm, inviting outbursts of temper. But equally there are opportunities for practice in self-control, practice in withholding the harsh word, persistence in "counting ten." Teacher, take yourself in hand, persistently maintain the attitude that every annoying situation affords drill in temper control. You will presently gain complete self-mastery. Teachers have an almost unique opportunity for growth in self-control, which is the progenitor, as it were, of self-development, the upbuilder of character, and the sure harbinger of success.

It is well known that when pugilists are contending for supremacy in the prize ring, the one who loses his temper loses the battle. Some fighters during the combat continually taunt the

adversary with expressions of scorn, hatred, ridicule, with the purpose of arousing his anger. This accomplished, the wily man may win, even though the angry man be the better pugilist.

With fault-finding parents the teacher must be on the alert to discern her rising temper, and resolute to check it. To lose her temper is to be instantly at a disadvantage. If the parent is angry, the teacher will invariably "win out" by keeping cool. When summoned to such an interview, let the teacher's resolve be: "No matter what comes, I will keep my temper."

An angry father once called at the home of a school principal to make a complaint. The lady who admitted him to the house gave him a seat in the parlor, and went to call the principal. She said to the latter quietly, "Be very careful what you say to Mr. A. He seems angry enough to fight." Now it happened that the principal was acquainted with Mr. A, and knew him to be an enthusiastic baseball devotee. Hence when he entered the parlor he greeted Mr. A in a bluff, hearty manner, and said, "Well, what do you think of the Giants now? Wasn't that a great game yesterday?" In a trice they were absorbed in the usual baseball conversation. Soon they were laughing and slapping their knees as baseball anecdotes were told. Half an hour passed delight-

fully, when suddenly Mr. A, looking at his watch, said, "Oh, I must be going! By the way, I came to see you about my daughter. The teacher gave her a low mark in arithmetic, and I wanted to inquire about it." "All right," said the principal, "I don't know about the matter personally, but I will look into it immediately, and let you know promptly all about it."

This principal made it a fixed rule to try to give satisfaction to every person who came to his office with a complaint of any kind. When some one called unexpectedly, and seemed to be wrought up, the principal often excused himself from the office for a few minutes so that he might consider how best to take up the matter that he suspected would be the burden of the complaint. The few minutes of silence also gave the parent time to "cool off." Thus the interview began with the parent less angry than when he first arrived, and with the principal firmly braced for whatever might come, determined to administer justice, though in a tactful manner; and above all to keep himself in poise. Many a difficulty was amicably adjusted in that office which, if differently handled, might have been the cause of trouble.

When the teacher loses her temper in the schoolroom, she is inevitably unjust. She sees fault where there is no fault. She exaggerates a

slight offense until it becomes enormous in her sight, and she punishes accordingly. She is bound to do wrong when angry. Counting ten or even a hundred will not avail unless she regain control of herself. Even then it were far better to postpone punishment until the following day. The teacher is hardly in condition to see facts and truths clearly immediately after she has recovered from a fit of anger. Her judgment will still be biased. Be sure that the decision as to the proper punishment wait. In this matter of punishment Aaron Burr's rule is most excellent: "Never do to-day what you can put off till to-morrow."

CHAPTER 12

WHY TEACHERS FAIL

The better way to learn anything is by positive rather than by negative methods. The ten commandments are for the most part negative; but the New Testament says "Thou shalt" instead of "Thou shalt not." The teacher's best course is to study good methods, visit good schools, affiliate with and admire good people. Nevertheless, just as there is much to be gained by a study of the negative commands of the Old Testament, so there are some things especially for teachers, to be learned by a consideration of "what not to do." By seeing how some one else made a mistake we may learn to avoid the same fate. Some teachers fail because they do not take school work seriously. A young man may decide to become a minister, but has little money. Therefore he resorts to teaching for a few years, to earn money to go to a college; but devotes little time and effort outside of school hours to that work. He spends his evenings studying, say, church history. His heart is in his coming profession, school work is incidental.

Now there is nothing specially reprehensible

in teaching school, as a stepping stone to something else, provided that one prepare himself suitably for the work of teaching and then put his heart into it. But short of these two conditions no one has a moral right to invade this responsible profession. It were little less than a crime to advance one's self by stepping upon the dead enthusiasms and prospects of forty children. But even those who go to teaching as a stepping stone to something else usually do better work than the so-called teachers who have no other purpose than to pocket the stipend. The former are at least ambitious. They are in earnest in one respect, which is better than not to be in earnest at all. The latter are failures before they begin.

There is a type of teacher who fails because he does not "keep on growing." To stand still in the march of progress is relatively to go backward. Not to use a muscle is to insure its deterioration. "How can we escape if we neglect?" is good scientific as well as religious doctrine. This type of teacher neglects the educational paper and the book on teaching. He absents himself from the summer school and other educational meetings—except under compulsion. He leaves the school building ten minutes after the pupils, takes a walk or reads the daily paper until supper, and after

supper goes down town to the store or elsewhere to pass the time in a way quite divorced from the interests of the school. The next morning he is at the school at, say, 8:45. He goes through the daily program perfunctorily. He "teaches" with book in hand. He gives little if any time, even in school hours, to preparing the lessons. Has he not a legal first grade certificate? To study the lessons is to confess ignorance of the subject in hand! Besides, it is for the pupils to study and recite; it is for the teacher to ask the questions!

Are there such teachers nowadays, or is this but an imaginary sketch? Ask any superintendent of experience and he will tell you that there is more truth than fancy in it. Of course the thorough-going superintendent will insist that this teacher either bestir himself or resign. The children are entitled to the services of a live teacher. And, one of the most important duties of any superintendent or board of education is to get rid of incompetent teachers.

Weakness in discipline is perhaps the most common cause of failure. Control of the pupils is the starting-point, the necessary preliminary, of good teaching. Attention, with good order, are prerequisites. Inability to control pupils has no necessary relation to the teacher's scholarship. There are those who have made excellent

records at normal school or college, but who do not possess the requisite tact and insight into human nature. However, both good scholarship, keen powers of observation, and a facile speech are invaluable because enabling control through making the lessons interesting. Indeed, this is one of the highest forms of control. Adults as well as children will go to any amount of pains with work in which their interest is thoroughly engaged. Therefore if the attention of the class lags, especially that of the older pupils, let the teacher so enliven the lessons with interesting information as to engage and hold their attention. Dr. E. E. White says that Mr. Platt R. Spencer always had, on the instant, the attention of his penmanship classes; for the moment Mr. Spencer began to write at the board the pupils were almost spellbound by his wonderful skill.

Some teachers fail because they neither like children nor enjoy teaching them. Few people attain real success in uncongenial work. The task which is distasteful is not attacked with zest—one has to force one's self to it; and this virtually precludes the attainment of a high standard of accomplishment. Merely to keep the children quiet, not through interest but through fear of punishment; to secure proficiency in lessons, but solely through stern insistence—this is not the

highest type of work. A teacher's success should be measured by the interest she awakens, by the ambition she arouses, by the progress of the pupils toward a noble manhood or womanhood; not by the degree of quiet in the classroom or the percentages at the examinations. The discerning superintendent will readily discover the difference, and will judge the teacher accordingly.

Teachers who dislike children had better seek some other career. If it is not feasible to change from teaching, then the teacher should by sheer force of will alter her sentiments toward children. "There is no situation in life," says Bulwer, "which we cannot sweeten or embitter at will. . . . If the mind can make one vigorous exertion, it can another; the same energy you put forth in acquiring knowledge would also enable you to baffle misfortune." Our predispositions and predeterminations have much to do with our subsequent likes and dislikes. Unless the teacher can so command her innate powers as to put herself into the proper attitude toward the children and toward her work, she must be willing to suffer Mrs. Poyser's characterization of Donnithorne. Mrs. Poyser was not to be dissuaded from declaring that she had "nothing to say again him, only it was a pity he couldna be hatched o'er again an hatched different!"

Another cause of failure is, with some teachers, their habit of scolding, with sarcasm, and ridicule. These three words should be banished from the schoolroom vocabulary, and teachers persisting in this bad habit should be banished therewith. There is no proper place anywhere for sarcasm and ridicule, while scolding should be relegated to the limbo of the lost arts!

Let a teacher once ridicule a pupil before his classmates, and it will be doubtful whether she can ever wholly win his regard. And if she resorts frequently to ridicule and sarcasm she will alienate the affections of the entire school, thus making success impossible. There are teachers so perennially fault finding that no pupil pleases them. Let the problem be correctly solved—the pupils will be criticized for the shape of their figures, or for the arrangement of the work. Let everything in the lesson for the day be perfect—the teacher will exclaim: “Why don’t you always do as well instead of inflicting upon us the usual miserable recitation?” Corporal punishment is not more severe than the unsparing torture of the perpetual critic. Are there such teachers? Ask your superintendent.

Some teachers use poor judgment in the punishments they choose. For instance, pupil A used a pin on pupil B—the latter was sent to the office for

discipline while A grinned impenitently behind his book. Another instance: A teacher, this time a young man, seriously proposed a rule that should a noise occur in the room which the teacher definitely located, he should punish the two pupils sitting at the desk whence the noise seemed to come, and the eight others at the surrounding desks; the argument being that at least two of these pupils must be guilty of the offense or have guilty knowledge of it, and, punishing the ten, no guilty pupil would escape! There are teachers who punish in one pupil what they overlook in another. Sometimes forty pupils will be detained after school charged with being noisy, although twenty of them had been quiet. Ill-judged criticisms and punishments cause pupils to believe the teacher to be unfair; and when once that idea obsesses the class, the teacher may as well ask to be transferred. In a contest between one teacher and forty convinced pupils, the latter generally win.

When we say a teacher fails we imply that she is so adjudged by the superintendent or the board of education. But are these judgments always justified in fact? May not the teacher be right and the superintendent wrong? What if the school system be antiquated or arbitrary, the standards mechanical, the prevailing requirement exalting

the letter rather than the spirit? If a teacher with high ideals encounter a system sponsored by officials afflicted, so to say, with hardened ideals, they may adjudge her failure—because they measure by a rusty scale. A certain normal graduate began her first year of teaching under such auspices. She introduced the new methods which she had learned at the normal school. Her principal came into the room one day and criticized these methods. The teacher defended herself by saying that she was only applying what she had learned at the normal school, and that she believed them to be sound. In an intolerant manner he asked, "How many years have you taught?" "I have not taught at all before this, as you well know; but these are methods taught and advocated by the normal school, and adopted by the best schools in the State." Said the principal, "My dear young lady, I have taught twenty years; and I tell you that the methods you use are impossible."

After that, whenever the teacher ventured to justify any methods to which the principal objected, the latter would always look at her with a knowing smile and say, "How many years have you taught?" This teacher, though discredited in that town, obtained later another charge where progressive ideas were in vogue, and where she

was a conspicuously successful teacher for ten years. Neither Shakespeare nor any other philosopher has attempted to demonstrate the proposition that long experience as a fool predicates a wise man; and the principal who has deliberately repelled new ideas for twenty years must not expect to be rated as up-to-date by competent authorities. "Prove all things but hold fast to that which is old," has not yet superseded "hold fast to that which is good."

Thus have been specified a number of causes of failure among teachers. A study of these and all other causes would probably lead us to these few general conclusions:

- 1 No teacher should expect to succeed whose heart is not in her work.

- 2 Love for children is a condition essential to the highest success in teaching.

- 3 Good judgment, tact, and firmness along with keen observation and proper training, and enthusiasm, are necessary to successful control of human beings of whatever age.

- 4 When a teacher finds herself in a non-progressive school system, her best course, if the system is not to be changed, is to change her position as soon as she honorably can.

CHAPTER 13

GETTING A BETTER POSITION

Not long ago the principal of an eight-room school said to his superintendent, "I have been in my present position three years; and while I am much pleased with it, and the people are very kind to me, I deem it proper to take a step in advance. Yet I have been so immersed in my work here that I have not so far had the time to look around for something better."

"You have pursued the right course," replied the superintendent. "It was your responsibility to make a success of this position; now it is my responsibility to see that you are properly rewarded." One year later this principal was elected to a desirable principalship in a large city through the recommendation of his superintendent.

At about the same time a young normal school graduate accepted a position to teach a remote rural school. At the end of her first term the superintendent asked her, "Where do you expect to teach next year?" Her reply was, "I should like nothing better than to go back to my little school for another year."

"A worthy choice," said the superintendent. "And I promise that you shall not be retarded in your professional career as a result of it. If your work the coming year is as good as I have every reason to expect, I shall do my best to get you into one of the best cities in this State next spring." At the proper time her name was handed to the superintendent of that city. He visited her school and engaged her on the spot at an advanced salary.

These two instances are cited to show that although good teaching, like virtue, is its own reward, it will also win incidental compensations. The surest way to gain a higher position is to do superior work in the present one. Superintendents and supervisors are asked every year to recommend teachers for choice positions. They go over their list and select those who have earned the right to promotion; and in every case the worthy ones are those who have faithfully and ably done their work however remote and obscure the school. Those who have shown little interest and enthusiasm and a lack of ambition, who have the narrow view that the teacher's work is but a temporary shift, are rightly passed by. It is the "growing" teachers who are in demand.

However, not all superintendents are so generous, or shall we say conscientious? There have

been superintendents who, if a teacher, especially in a remote school, had done good work, would selfishly conceal the fact from the officials of other places; and would keep the teacher in ignorance of any openings of which they had learned. They would argue that as it is to the interest of that remote school to keep a good teacher once she has been found, her departure would be detrimental to the school, to the pupils, and to the community.

These superintendents were presumably teachers themselves at one time, some in modest if not remote schools at first. Also, presumably they were successful teachers. Why did they not remain in their early positions? Why injure the school and the community by abandoning them to the chances of an incompetent successor? If their superintendent had knowledge of a higher opening and kept the information from them, did they not deem themselves shabbily treated? But if their promotion, when it came, did come through the recommendation of their superintendent were they hesitant about departing, were they unappreciative, or were they duly grateful to him? Did they consider him disloyal to the remote little school and its community? Or did they, with him, hold the broader view that not only is the progressive teacher entitled to progress, but also that

the very needs of the larger community entitle it to the services of the growing teachers, and to draw on the smaller communities to obtain them? This practice of keeping good teachers year after year by deliberately concealing their merits is a short-sighted policy. The teachers will become discouraged. "No matter how hard I try, my superintendent does nothing for me," will be their plaint. "He is ready enough to accept advancement himself, but he is willing that my life shall be spent here, to the detriment of some other community in which I believe I can accomplish greater good to all concerned, including myself! What's the use!"

On the other hand, if a superintendent is known to take a personal interest in the welfare and advancement of his teachers, he will have the choice among ambitious and aspiring candidates eager to put themselves under his jurisdiction; and in due time his corps will be largely composed of eager, enthusiastic, progressive workers, all of them capable of high grade results because of the very knowledge that he will appreciate their efforts not only in words but by appropriate deeds. That sort of superintendent will fill the more desirable vacancies under his supervision from the ranks of his own teachers, so far as possible, and will not detail to outsiders the best positions,

thus closing them to his own faithful co-workers.

Again, however willing a superintendent may be to advance the interests of his teachers, there nevertheless will be occasions when one must strike out for herself, seek new openings, and try for them, taking proper measures to make her application successful. There is nothing censurable in this when the circumstances are proper. Some positions come unsought; but in the majority of cases the opportunity does not "knock at the door;" one must go out and seek it.

It has already been said that good work in one's present position is the best recommendation for another. This secures the favorable verdict of one's superintendent and local school board. Without such endorsement, advancement is exceedingly difficult. Few boards of education will elect a teacher who is unable to show a record of success, either as student or as teacher.

Then there is the question of the personal interview versus the written application. Upon learning of a vacancy for which you wish to apply, the best course is to make an appointment to call on the superintendent. It is not wise to call without an appointment. The superintendent may not be at home, or he may be too busy at the time to receive you. Once the appointment has been

made, keep it punctually. To fail to keep it, or even to be tardy, will create an unfavorable opinion of you—so unfavorable as even to bias the judgment of your interlocutor. That little evidence of unbusinesslike character may be the grain that will swing the scale against you.

In one case an applicant for a principalship telephoned (long distance) at 2:30 o'clock at night to the chairman of the teachers' committee in order to get some information regarding the position. The chairman said at the next meeting of the board, "Under no circumstances will I vote for that man. A man so lacking in judgment as to put in his application at 2:30 A. M. is not the sort of man that we require for this position." And the application was not considered by the board.

It were wise to take to the interview a formal letter of application, together with a letter of introduction or recommendation from the superintendent with whom you have been teaching. If there was also a principal, a letter from him would carry weight. However, in lieu of commendatory letters, if unavailable, "references" are usually considered nearly as satisfactory, as the persons referred to are generally consulted in writing when the superintendent is making his investigation.

The purpose of the superintendent in granting you the interview is to "look you over" so as to appraise your personality. He wants to "size you up" as to character and qualifications—ability to teach, demeanor, appearance, agreeable address, and command of language. If you commit several grammatical errors while speaking, you may be sure that you will not be accepted. To have quarreled with your principal or to have been at odds with the board will imperil your case. If you state as a reason for wanting to change positions the fact, say, that you have been working in a benighted community in which no teacher could get fair treatment, you will fare badly in the competition. Discontented, dissatisfied, querulous candidates need not apply! You may say that you wish to change for the sake of the broader field, the better opportunities to move upwards; and you may confess a liking for the larger salary; but it is not necessary to detail the disagreeable aspects of your present position. Dwell rather on the pleasant side. All positions have their troubles. Superintendents prefer optimists to pessimists on their teaching staff.

The applicant's statements during the interview should be brief and to the point—not so brief as to give the impression of diffidence or timidity. There have been candidates who talked so volubly

that the interview was a monologue, the superintendent having scarcely a chance to ask a question or inject a comment! On the other hand, there have been applicants whom the superintendent could not prevail upon to talk, and would answer only in monosyllables the questions asked. Capable teachers are presumed to know how to say all that is necessary without talking too much or too little. Yet this does not imply that the superintendent would not have you talk. He cannot estimate your worth unless you reveal your personality through speech.

This interview concluded, you will be guided as to further procedure by the superintendent's advice. He may suggest that you see some members of the board of education. He may wish you to get additional letters of recommendation—perhaps one from your normal school principal. Usually there should not be more than three or four letters, all from school officials or educators. Letters from private individuals such as clergymen, lawyers, and business men should be eschewed. They may do more harm than good. Such friends are interested in your personal advancement while the superintendent will wish to know what kind of teacher you are, and only school people can give him trustworthy information on that point.

As a sequel to the personal interview a visit by the superintendent need not surprise you. Your school and grounds are always neat, your lessons well planned and prepared, your blackboards in good order, you are becomingly dressed (not elaborately), so that it is not necessary for you to make any special preparation in anticipation of his coming. He would probably drop in unannounced.

After a very short greeting, go on with the work according to schedule. Do not at once change your program and call out your star classes. Give the visitor a copy of your program, and if he wishes to see any class out of its regular order he will tell you. If you happen to be having tests or other written work when he calls, then of course you will at once offer to teach any classes he may wish to hear.

It is a mistake to try too hard to impress your visitor with your ability or with the proficiency of your pupils. You will best serve your candidacy by conducting the school and teaching the classes just as if he were not in the room. Be your natural self. That is what he came to see. If he wishes to see anything special, he will ask you for it.

After all, perhaps some one else will get the position! It may possibly be that the superintendent has found a teacher who, in his judgment,

is better fitted for that special work than you! In that case take your disappointment bravely. Write to the superintendent that you are glad he has found so good a teacher, and that perhaps on some other occasion he may again give your name consideration. It may be that you have applied for other positions, and have failed in every case. Do not be cast down. Return to your old position determined that the coming year shall be the best you have ever lived. You will be more sympathetic with the children, more affable to the community, more alert for new ideas in pedagogy, more sedulous in your own culture. You will take systematic measures to improve your physique. Then next year you will again make applications, with added experience and growth to your credit. You are the more likely to succeed in your quest. But if you do not, never become bitter. Let "each new temple" be "nobler than the last." By and by you will be "free!"

Failure to secure a new position is not always a misfortune. It is often a blessing. One principal, who had applied for a new position, stood second on the list, and so was not elected. Though disappointed, he was not disheartened. Six months later he applied elsewhere, and again stood second. Still he was not discouraged, but

applied at a third place. Here he was elected, but the salary was reduced so that he could not afford to accept. Then like a bolt from the clear sky came an offer, unsolicited, which was much better than any of the three he had missed. Five years later he again applied for a higher position. Once more he received the customary information that he had stood second. But three months afterwards he was again chosen to a better position than that he had just missed. Election to any of the four positions he did not secure would have been to his disadvantage, even though he had been successful in the work. First class positions are seldom to be had at the outset; and it is better to wait a year or two for a position in a good system of schools than to go at once into a second rate system in which promotion may be slow, and from which it may be difficult to advance to something better.

Life has discouragements for all; and the true teacher, as every other real man or woman, will bear disappointments with equanimity. Colonel Francis W. Parker was elected to his last position at the age of sixty-six. All his life he was eager, alert, progressive, always on the lookout for the greatest opportunity for usefulness. When one ceases to aspire, he has reached the dead-line.

CHAPTER 14

VACATIONS

One of the great blessings a teacher enjoys is a long vacation period. While the majority of workers in other fields are compelled to be at business three hundred days in the year, the teacher is on regular duty less than two hundred. She therefore has unusual opportunities and privileges.

It is well that the teacher works at the school so few hours per week, and so few weeks per year. One who has had no experience in teaching cannot appreciate the wear and tear on the nerves that is inevitable in high-grade teaching. The teacher who can say at the end of a school day that she feels as fresh as when she began in the morning is not of the first rank. She would not have *given herself* to the pupils. Tired muscles can be rested in a night; but not so, tired nerves.

The duty of the teacher during the vacation period is both to rest the nerves and to build up the physical power. She must not only repair the ravages of the past year, but store up a surplus of energy for the year to come. The latter is accomplished better by intelligent and systematic work in physical culture than by mere rustication.

It were well to become familiar with one of the several good systems of training the body. During the vacation she will have ample time to carry out the exercises regularly. For instance, one teacher took up exercises in breathing. The time required was five minutes each morning and five in the evening. In three weeks she increased her chest expansion two inches. This brought with it improved circulation and digestion. These exercises were worth more to her than hours of walking would have been if without proper breathing.

If the teacher has defects in her bodily frame, such as swayback, projecting head, round shoulders, stiff back, the vacation period is the very time to cure the defect by means of appropriate daily exercise. Walking should be on the program, and plenty of it, rain or shine, care being taken to avoid excessive fatigue. There should be wholesome food and much sleep. Some teachers during vacation err in staying up late—to enjoy social activities. These should be judiciously and firmly subordinated to the higher purposes of the vacation period, namely, the gaining of physical, mental, and moral improvement.

As the body gains much from appropriate exercises, so the mind is strengthened by worthy reading and conversation. Too often the subjects

discussed at summer boarding houses are of a frivolous or at least an unimportant order. If the mind dwells on the small affairs of the day, it gets no stimulus, no inspiration. To fritter away the time is to gain nothing, not even relaxation. About as much mental energy is required to speculate on the petty acts of the various people one meets at a summer hotel as to dwell on fine characters in fiction, or to converse with the equally fine people one may select for acquaintanceship. The teacher should always be alert to meet worthy associates and to fill the mind with uplifting thoughts. The indulgence in chit-chat and light reading may as well be "relegated to the occasional."

The teacher should be familiar with more than one of the masterpieces of literature. The vacation period is the very opportunity needed for continuous reading. During the school year so many other things claim attention that it may take a month to finish a book. Under these conditions it is not possible to gain so clear an impression of a serious book as it is when the reading covers a period of but a few days. It has been said that the four fine gentlemen in English fiction are Sir Roger de Coverley, the Vicar of Wakefield, Henry Esmond, and Colonel Newcomb. Here is an excellent program of reading for one summer

or part of a summer. Intimate companionship with these four men cannot help but have an uplifting influence on the reader. Besides, it is a reflection on the scholarship and taste of a person presumably educated, not to be familiar with these great characters. George Eliot may be taken up. The "Scenes from Clerical Life" may be called her most spontaneous sketches. Also, "Silas Marner," "Adam Bede," and "Middlemarch" should be read. Unless the reader be especially fond of George Eliot, she need not read the rest of her works, for the life message of the author is comprehended in the books mentioned above.

The teacher will, of course, not neglect great poetry. Some day she will read "Paradise Lost" from beginning to end at a few sittings. Then she will probably wish to read the "Paradise Regained" and "Comus." This is great poetry. The soul is thrilled by some of the fine passages:

"So dear to heaven is saintly chastity,
That when a soul is found sincerely so,
A thousand liveried angels lackey her."

"Scylla wept,
And chid her barking waves into attention,
And fell Charybdis murmured soft applause."

“High on his throne of royal state, which far
Outshone the wealth of Ormus or of Ind,
Or where the gorgeous East with richest hand
Showers on her kings barbaric pearl and gold,
Satan exalted sat.”

The teacher who will memorize these and other passages will lay up in her mind rich treasures that will be hers to enjoy forever.

History and biography form an exhaustless field for stimulating reading. Several volumes of John Fiske, for instance, will give a picture of periods in the history of our country written in a style as interesting as that of Dickens or Thackeray. The lives of such fine women as Frances E. Willard, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Clara Barton, Mrs. Roger A. Pryor, and Alice Freeman Palmer should be read by all teachers, not only because they can be used in school but because of their influence on the teacher's own personal life.

The field of essays should not be neglected. Every few months some book, embodying the thoughts of a strong man or woman, comes from the press. Such a book is worth reading. Dr. Cabot's "What Men Live by," Henderson's "Children of Good Fortune," Hyde's "From Epicurus to Christ," Gulick's "Mind and Work" and "The Efficient Life," are the sort of books that enlarge one's views on life and duty.

The program thus far suggested in this chapter is likely to impress some readers as perhaps too heavy. That may be so in some circumstances. For example, one's health may not, for a time, be equal to it—but that should be true only for a time. Otherwise, the program should not be too heavy for the person of character, seriously bent on success. Besides, no one can become really a good teacher who is not imbued with the deep purpose to serve humanity; and to that end one will employ both physical and mental resources, as well as available time. The teacher who would not prefer Colonel Newcomb, say, or Dinah Morris, to the "Girl of Broadway" or the "Man of Mystery"; or the literature accepted as substantial, to the admittedly ephemeral, had better look to her character. Let every worker, returning from vacation, return a nobler, bigger character by virtue of a sensible observance of a sensible program.

George Meredith, in "Diana of the Crossways," remarks:

"Every form of labor, even this flimsiest, as you esteem it, should minister to growth. If in any branch of us we fail in growth, there is, you are aware, an unfailing aboriginal democratic old monster that waits to pull us down; certainly the branch, possibly the tree; and for the welfare of Life

we fall. . . . Especially be wary of the disrelish of brainstuff. You must feed on something. Matter that is not nourishing to brains can help to constitute nothing but the bodies which are pitched on rubbish heaps. Brainstuff is not lean stuff; the brainstuff of fiction is internal history, and to suppose it dull is the profoundest of errors."

What is suggested here of companionship in books is of course just as true of companionship with real people. Vacation supplies two opportunities, that of solitude and that of society; and as for the latter, there are often several grades from which to select.

It was said that Simpkins' dog could not bear to be loose, and howled when he was tied up. There are some people who cannot bear to be alone even for a short period. If they have not the excitement of conversation they languish in drab discontent. That argues the shallow mind; for he who has "taken to his own" the fine characters of literature, who has adopted the high ideals of life and service, who has habituated himself to service—to doing good, he will welcome and contentedly embrace the very opportunities—often too few, alas—of uninvaded seclusion. It was said of Milton that he deemed his blindness a blessing in one respect because it compelled him to seek the society of his own thoughts.

During vacation time, when the mind is rested, when there is freedom from the calls of daily life, and especially when the mind has been engaged in high thinking or with noble characters, it becomes creative. New ideals spring up—new aims and purposes. One becomes imbued afresh with the dignity of life, the grandeur of achievement, the joy of nobility. One feels above “the cares that infest the day,” and determines to live on a higher plane. Solitude so often furnishes the occasion for this, and also the wherewithal; and there is no time equal to the vacation period to embrace and enjoy its peculiar benefits.

The best companionship, in vacation time, aside from books is the companionship of congenial souls who also look upon life in a spirit of earnestness. This by no means excludes the jest, the repartee, and other good fun. But it does mean that there is little place for mere silliness and inanity—frivolous conversation and garrulous discussion. With such people fun is of a high order—full of spice and relish, stimulating, or even resting, the mind.

If it were possible to take down a day’s conversation in some groups at summer hotels and analyze it, there would be found a very small amount of wheat, in contrast with the large quantity of chaff. This dwelling on the sordid, or the

vainly frivolous side of life, as Meredith intimates, spells deterioration. From a vacation spent in this kind of society one returns dissatisfied, petulant, looking for trouble, taking offense when none is meant, and showing an altogether disagreeable disposition—baneful penalty of shallow thinking and careless living.

Compare with this the vacation spent in a small community in Maine one summer. There were about one hundred people, housed in camp-meeting grounds. There were classes and lectures as well as entertainments. One prominent minister gave a lecture each day on the Bible as viewed from the standpoint of the higher criticism. Questions and discussions were invited. One of the most eminent preachers and editors in the country gave four addresses. A university professor read Browning's "Saul," Riley's poems, and a lecture on "Mother Goose." A teacher of music in a conservatory gave violin recitals. The great Wulf Fries played the violincello. When these men were disengaged they gathered in groups and conversed on the questions of the day. Think what it meant to listen to or participate in this social intercourse. To sit for an hour in a swing listening to questions of one of the foremost men of the day was a liberal education. Four weeks of such association transformed the think-

ing and the living of some of the students. Any one who has enjoyed such a privilege afterwards can hardly possess his soul in patience when thrown into the company of those whose conversation begins and ends in nothing.

Truly, the vacation period assumes an importance for the teacher that is not always recognized. It may be passed in mere physical and mental diversion, or it may be spent in physical and mental development. It may broaden the teacher through worthy reading and companionship, or it may contract her ideas and ideals by unworthy and frivolous associations. Give careful forethought to the vacations.

CHAPTER 15

SUMMER SCHOOLS

How many public school teachers salve their conscience by hugging the fact that they have secured certificates showing their qualification for teaching. Those who have life certificates may assure themselves that they have abundant evidence of their competency to teach. Why therefore worry to take courses at a summer school? Why study at all?

To many readers that would seem a weak conclusion. Indeed, we all know that even the best teacher can become better and still better; that there is no limit to the possibilities of professional improvement. Yet the foregoing argument was seriously set forth some time ago, in an editorial of a prominent daily paper. Not to attempt to controvert so futile a pronouncement, suffice it to say that if teachers in service made no attempt to improve themselves the schools would become less and less efficient. It is said that Michael Angelo's motto when an old man was, "Still I am learning." Every proper-minded teacher will adopt the same motto. She will continue ever in the attitude of an eager learner.

The summer vacation affords ample time for attendance at a summer school. The question now is, does that pay? Is it worth while? Judging from the verdict of those who have taken summer courses the answers are in the affirmative. And judging from the courses offered and the strong staff of instructors at nearly all summer schools the affirmative answer may be convincingly affirmed.

There are oftentimes reasons why teachers should attend a summer school at a certain place; but if the teacher is free to choose, it would seem wise to bear in mind several considerations: First, the summer school should combine study with rest and recreation. Two regular courses are sufficient for any one. There will then be opportunity for reading, social intercourse, physical exercise (not omitting walking), and genuine resting—complete relaxation for the unduly fatigued, with abundance of sleep. Secondly, it were well to venture different localities: one summer at the seashore, another in the mountains east, west, south, north! A delightful tour every summer on the way to and from, but more important the pleasure and profit of meeting the people of different sections of the country and observing their varying environments. In Maine one will find a different type of American from that found in

Virginia. Acquaintanceships and friendships are certain to be formed, leading to correspondence and visitation. One will also learn of the educational conditions in the various sections of the country. In other words, there is no better way of becoming broadminded than by mingling with people of varying types and dispositions, and no way of learning to understand conditions better than by actually seeing things for one's self.

Too many summer school students undertake so much that at the end of each day they are exhausted. They return to their homes or schools depleted in body and in mind. This seems an improvident policy. True, there may be many courses that one would long to take; but one's best welfare demands that when the strength is to be conserved, interest, ambition, enthusiasm, all are to be held in leash. Too much of even the best things is unwholesome. "Enough may be too much." The end of the session should exhibit a body of teachers built up in physique, with mental vigor keen yet unimpaired and with enthusiasm not waning but waxing.

The work at the summer school should not all be professional. One subject, such as psychology, or school management, or methods of teaching, is enough of that character. The other subject should be cultural. If a course in poetry, fiction,

or essays is given, it were well to take it; or a course in nature study, or in some phase of manual training may prove congenial. Educators now believe all these courses are to be approached in a broadly cultural sense. There are often special addresses and lectures. These should be attended if possible. It is interesting, by hearing people of prominence, to gain first hand impressions of them.

The late Superintendent William N. Barringer, of Newark, when a young man, determined to hear prominent speakers. He heard Lincoln's famous speech. He had a pew in the church of Henry Ward Beecher, and saw him sell slaves from the pulpit. Any one who ever had the privilege of sitting beside Dr. Barringer, hearing his reminiscences of these and other great men, will carry the memory of him and of them through life, and always to advantage.

The value of courses at a summer school consists not so much in the amount of information gained as in the new points of view and new inspiration. Those whose routine work year by year knows little variation, and who do not go out in search of new ideas, will cease to progress.

Much is heard these days of industrial work in school—manual activities, the practical arts. If a teacher has been so unfortunate as to know little

of this movement, let her go to a summer school in which this work is featured. There she will learn the meaning and purpose of these activities. She will be astonished that she should have been teaching for several years and not have appreciated their value; and she will return to her own school stimulated by the new modes of doing and thinking, to improve greatly the quality of her teaching.

Similarly, a course in the teaching of reading in the schools may disclose the serious fact that one may not have been efficient in this work, may not have brought out the really vital points in the reading lessons, may have insisted too much on the letter to the neglect of the spirit. The instructor will open one's eyes to the beauties of literature—result: new ideas, growth, pleasure, better teaching.

There is still another value which accrues from serious work at summer school—it often leads to an increased salary or to a higher position or both. At summer schools one meets superintendents who are always in search of good teachers. The instructors are glad to recommend the promising students. Attendance at the summer school is in itself testimony that the teacher is progressive; and not infrequently one's local board will add to the salaries of those who have evidenced their

ambition by devoting their leisure to and by incurring the expense of such attendance. While, therefore, the teacher goes to summer school expressly to increase her skill and power, it is not unlikely to follow that in addition she will also gain the material reward that is a just recognition of her attempts at improvement.

CHAPTER 16

THE TEACHER'S SATURDAYS AND SUNDAYS

The good teacher will have put so much of life and energy into the work of the five school days of the week that on Saturday and Sunday she will need a change. These two days are her little vacation, to which many of the suggestions in the chapter on "Vacations" apply. The question before us is how best to use the two days. Shall they be spent in idleness, or shall they be full days, but with change of activity? Which will be the better investment?

An increasing number of teachers undertake Saturday courses at colleges and other institutions—an excellent plan provided overwork is avoided. To give the entire Saturday to these courses, with the time and effort necessary to preparation, is unwise except for persons of unusual endurance. Overwork is exhausting to a degree; and some teachers pursue the Saturday courses so breathlessly, the greater part of the time, as to become "driven." They get "nerves," and lose their health, which, when declining, is

freshness sapped and power spent. Excessive work may become a positive evil.

Saturday study moderately pursued is wholesome and bracing. Inspiration is gained—from the professor in charge, from the classmates, and from the books. New and broader fields of interest are explored. The trip to the college is in itself a little excursion out from the monotony of the week into one cannot predict what enlivenments.

The growing teacher will also attend some of the Saturday gatherings of teachers. Ordinarily teachers' meetings should not be held on Saturday; but it is not possible to have all the various meetings—state, sectional, and county—on school days. The teacher cannot afford to consider herself detached from her co-workers in the profession. Those who keep aloof are injuring themselves, besides depriving others of the encouragement of their presence. To become acquainted with the teachers in one's neighborhood, to imbibe their ideas and to impart one's own, is not only a pleasure but should be a duty to the profession. If all teachers refrained from fellowship and cooperation, the profession would suffer much.

Local meetings in which the teacher actively participates are of great advantage to every participant. Moreover they, also, sometimes lead to

advancement. A teacher of Latin in a small, remote high school, once read a paper on that subject before the State High School Teachers' Association. Within the following week she received three offers of positions from superintendents who had heard her paper; and in a few months she was installed in an excellent high school at an increased salary.

A young man once gave a talk before a county teachers' association. In the audience was a citizen of the town. He was so much pleased that he secured the young man's election to the board of education, and two years later was instrumental in having him elected principal of the local schools.

Good teachers are not uniformly fortunate in their advancement, they may be overlooked by those in search of teachers. If these same teachers were to appear oftener in public, and were to impart to their presence an active instead of a passive rôle, their abilities would become more manifest, and they would be "in the running" to secure the promotion to which their merits entitle them. When flowers "blush unseen," no one is to blame if they "waste their fragrance."

To speak and act in public is of direct help in the teacher's work, both as a stimulant and as an exercise in self-confidence. The teacher who gives

a talk on Saturday will go to school on Monday with enthusiasm notably enhanced. She will be keen for work and will teach with power. She has taken an intellectual tonic that will arouse energies hitherto dormant. The teacher who gives a talk gains more benefit, possibly, than she bestows.

It would seem, therefore, that the good teacher will devote her five teaching days to the direct work of the classroom, and her Saturdays to her own development in a professional way; this, of course, reacting on the classroom.

How shall a teacher spend the Sunday? According to her conscience, some would say. But that should not preclude an intelligent choice based on reflection, and exercised with discretion. It is not only a legitimate but a very pertinent practice for the teacher to consider what is her wisest course on Sundays, both as an individual and as a teacher.

Two young school principals were once teaching in districts about twenty miles apart, one in a seashore city, the other inland. One day they compared notes as to their Sundays. The latter described his activities on that day as follows: "At ten o'clock I go to church services, where I sing in the choir. At 11:30 we have Sunday School, in which I teach a class of twenty-five young

ladies and play for the singing. At one o'clock we have dinner. At three I go to an Italian mission and drill the congregation in singing. At six-thirty we have a men's league meeting in the church, at which I play the organ and lead the singing. At 7:30 I again participate in the church services. Besides, we have choir practice every Saturday evening."

"How do you feel when Sunday is over?" asked his friend.

"Tired out," was the reply. "I must say that no day in the week is as hard on me as Sunday."

"I pursue a totally different course," said the friend. "I go to church once on Sunday, but I do not sing in the choir, neither do I ever attend Sunday School. On the contrary I spend the rest of the day quietly reading, or filling my lungs with the ozone on the boardwalk. I contend that I can do more good to the children in my school by freshening up mind and body on Sunday than I could by participating in a large number of church activities with their inevitable drain on my energies."

President William DeWitt Hyde, of Bowdoin College, himself a clergyman, in an address to teachers, urged this latter course. "Go to church once on Sunday," he said in substance, "but never stay for Sunday School. If you do, you

are bound to carry your week-day work into the Sabbath. You must get away from teaching."

The teacher who is imbued with the right spirit gives herself and spends herself for her pupils five days in the week. This is a drain on her physical and spiritual resources that makes frequent vacations a necessity. She is in close touch with her pupils at least thirty hours per week; and to supply forty children for thirty hours with encouragement and other stimuli is enough to exhaust the energies of any person. Two days out of seven away from school and its routine, giving thought to one's own upbuilding, is the best program for the teacher and for her pupils. One teacher cannot furnish stimulus to the whole world. Something must be left for others to do. She who attempts too much is liable to lose all.

Teachers are so valuable in Sunday School, that they are eagerly sought after. Often the teachers are the best educated and the most capable minds in the Sunday School. They know how to control pupils, teach them effectively, and conduct the program intelligently. There is no question as to their value and acceptability in the Sunday School. The theorem propounded is that in one year the teacher will do more good in the world by teaching five days per week than by teaching six.

In rural communities, however, it is believed that the foregoing rule should be abrogated. The good teacher of a rural school must, in the nature of things, be a community worker. She must participate in the life of the people, mingling with them and assisting in their activities. For her to hold aloof from the doings which fill so large a part of the lives of the country folk as those of the Sunday School is not only to lose an opportunity but to weaken her hold on their good will. But the five school days of the rural teacher are by no means so wearing as those of her city sister. The former is usually installed in a building with but one floor, with fine air, with only twenty pupils, and in freedom; while the latter may be compelled to climb to a fourth floor, with factory smoke and noises continually perceptible; with fifty pupils, and working under the high pressure of close supervision. The rural school teacher will never faint because she is compelled to conduct her pupils from the fifth floor to the street and back again five time in one day in the fire drill rehearsal. Hence the teacher in the country, free from the stress and strain of her city sister, may well accomplish in some lines the things which for the city teacher would be unwise to undertake.

There must be some hours between Friday

evening and Monday morning during which the good teacher should strive to put herself "in tune with the infinite." This may best be done by filling the mind with great thoughts from the Bible, from poetry, or prose, or nature. Nothing so lifts the whole life as a noble thought. The more anyone dwells in the companionship of wisdom and inspiration the more will he become wise and inspired.

CHAPTER 17

READING THE BIBLE IN THE SCHOOL

Every morning in practically every school in the land principals and teachers read selections from the Bible. It may be worth while to consider the purposes of this reading, and how it may be most effectively done.

One of the purposes is to establish its pre-eminence as **THE BOOK**. Pupils are thus brought to regard it as occupying a unique yet universal position. Such recognition gives it a dignity and impressiveness that are of great importance in its influence on the minds of the children. Another purpose is to teach the children the lessons and the truths which the Bible contains. Nothing equals this Book for training in ideals and character. The more freely the children imbibe the spirit of the Bible, the better will be our citizenship in the future.

If a principal or a teacher reads the Bible to his pupils merely because such practice has the sanction of custom or of law, if he does not endeavor to impress its lessons on his pupils through his reading, the exercise will be purely formal and mechanical, and will "fall flat," lacking vitality.

In many schools, and in many pulpits, the Scriptures are read so mechanically and monotonously that one might suspect the reader of a distaste for his task, as if it were uninteresting, or even disagreeable, to be got through with perfunctorily and then dismissed from his mind. A teacher who will prepare a geography lesson with much forethought and skill will often venture a Scripture lesson without preparation, and with results wholly negligible. He forgets to apply his pedagogy; indeed, the thought may never have occurred to him that pedagogy may be applicable to this exercise.

The great harm done by a perfunctory reading of the Bible in school is not only that its lessons are lost but the attitude of the teacher becomes the attitude of the pupils, so that they soon feel that Scripture reading is equally perfunctory a procedure. It is quite possible that the lack of interest in the Bible on the part of many adults is owing to this very training. They have sat so long under formal Scripture reading in school and in church that the Book itself seems to them to be merely formal. Its influence for practical good is thus much lessened.

Properly managed the Scripture exercise can be made vital. It can be made interesting to the pupils, and its truths can be set forth in a manner

so forceful as to fix an indelible impression on their minds. Of course, it is presumed that the teacher must confine himself to the reading—without comments, that being generally a legal requirement.

The teacher should select her readings wisely. In the lower grades the simple stories and psalms are the most appropriate. Even in the high school some of the argumentative discourses of the apostles are not as suitable as other parts of the Bible. It does little good to read selections that pupils cannot understand, and there is a positive danger here as has already been suggested.

Having chosen a suitable chapter, the teacher should carefully read each paragraph to herself, in advance, and study how its meaning may best be rendered—which words should be emphasized, how to pronounce them, where to pause, and the tone to be used. Then the teacher should read clearly, as he would a secular selection, and as naturally as possible, yet in such a way as to maintain the dignity of the subject.

It is probable that some readers of this chapter have heard Professor S. H. Clark, of the University of Chicago, read the Scriptures at Chautauqua, N. Y., or elsewhere. Professor Clark uses no gestures when reading the Scriptures. All his effects are gained through the other elements of

expression. He preserves perfectly the dignity of the subject. But when one has heard him read the story of Joseph, or the story of Absalom, or a parable, he feels that the Scriptures have taken on a new significance. The characters portrayed seem real. He changes one's whole attitude toward the Bible. People have been heard to say, "After hearing Professor Clark read the Scriptures I don't care to listen to any more of the service; he has made such an impression that I want nothing more just now."

Having made a suitable selection and having read it expressively, the most important thing has not yet been accomplished. It remains for the spirit of the Bible to be made the spirit of the school—for the teacher to exemplify in his life the teachings he has read. How much good do you suppose a teacher accomplishes who reads the parable of the prodigal son, while denying the prodigals in his own school! Or if he reads that "he that ruleth his spirit is better than he that taketh a city," and forthwith loses his temper in the schoolroom? Or if he reads "Be kindly affectioned one toward another, in brotherly love," but is devoid of sympathy with his pupils? A teacher had better not read the Scriptures in school than proclaim their great truths, only to contradict them by his character and actions.

To do that would be to teach that Scripture is to be read regularly, but not to be lived up to—that there is no necessary connection between hearing and doing. If this does not produce atheists, it at least has a tendency to develop indifferentists, who are but little better. What we need in the schoolroom are “living epistles,” as well as Scriptural epistles.

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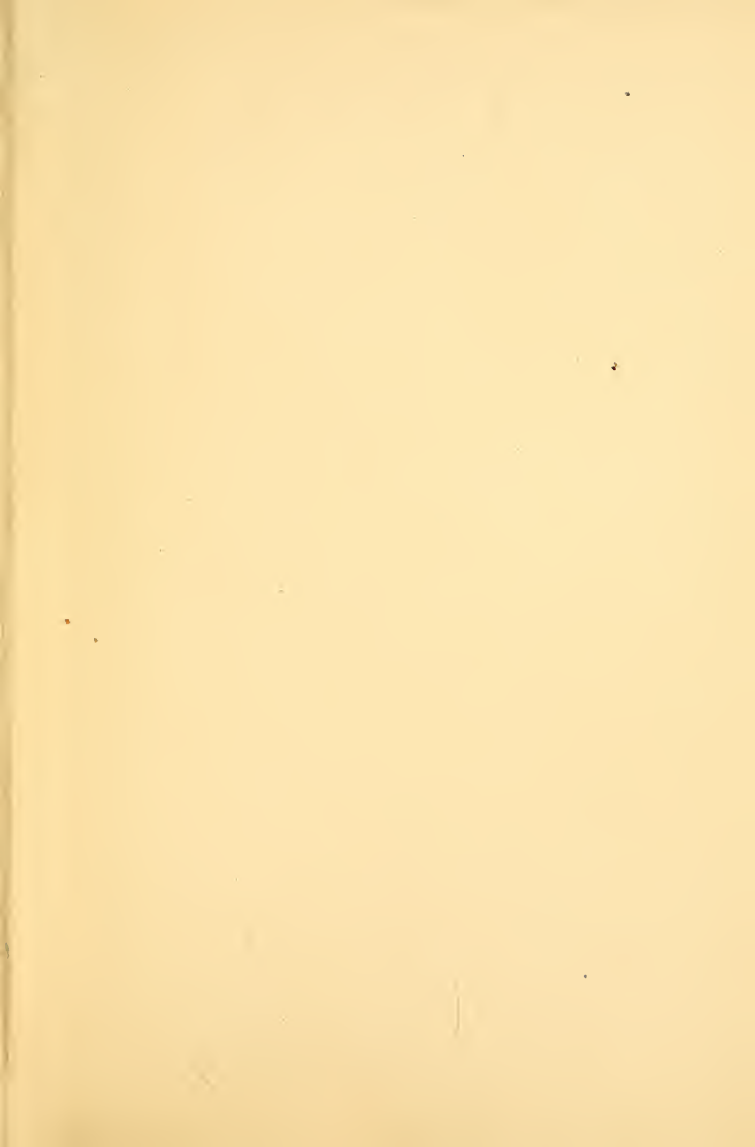
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